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Struggling lunch

A rare Twany eagle carries its struggling lunch, a frog, to the top of a tree in the Nairobi National Park. (Reuter wirephoto)

NY cracks down on illegal night club

Arson suspect held

NEW YORK, March 26. (Agencies): A hard-luck Cuban refugee was formally charged today with setting the fire that killed 87 people in an illegal New York night club and police said he did it with a dollar's worth of petrol because his girlfriend had spurned him.

Julio Gonzalez, 36, described as a quiet man always polite to strangers, was ordered held without bail, charged with the largest mass murder in US history — killing partygoers who packed the Happy Land social club in the New York borough of the Bronx on Sunday.

Police said Gonzalez had begged his girlfriend, a ticket taker at the club, to return to him. When she refused and had him thrown out of the club, he had a few drinks and then bought a dollar's worth of petrol and set fire to Happy Land's only working door.

Police said he confessed and one source described him as a "man screwed up over a woman."

Gonzalez, who came to the United States in the 1980 Cuban boat-lift from Mariel, was sent to the city's Riker's Island jail where guards have placed him in an isolated cell and mounted a "suicide watch" in case he tries to add his own life to the death toll.

The flames quickly engulfed the tiny club frequented by Hom-

duran and other Hispanic immigrants, its thick smoke suffocating the people crammed inside dancing to Salsa music.

Firemen reported that several people died in the fumes with their drinks still in their hands. Many were dressed in their Sunday best to celebrate at a club named "Happy Land" in honour of the United States, the place where immigrants came seeking a better life.

While Gonzalez was described as remorseful and filled with tears, a wave of anger erupted in the poor Bronx neighbourhood where the fire took place.

Area residents demanded he be turned over to them because New York state does not have the death penalty. "He must be crazy. We know what to do with him," one woman told reporters.

Gonzalez was described by acquaintances as a man who had little in life. He lost his job as a warehouseman six months ago and the woman he lived with threw him out of their apartment three months ago.

The woman, who was not identified by police, was one of five people who survived the blaze. She and two other friends told police about his coming to the club and police arrested him about 12 hours after the fire, waking him up from a deep sleep. Police said he had gone to bed



Gonzalez knowing the damage the blaze had caused.

City officials began shutting many of the illegal nightclubs that dot New York, forming a chain of dangerous speakeasies without safeguards against fire. By mid-day, 22 of New York's estimated 700 social clubs had been closed.

Happy Land had been under an eviction order for more than a year and officials were at a loss to explain why it was still operating.

Social service agencies manned a school near the club to help relatives make funeral arrangements, offering in many cases to foot the bill.

People flee from Kashmir torture

ISLAMABAD, March 26. (AP): Thousands of people who claim they were tortured and abused by Indian soldiers have fled the troubled state of Jammu-Kashmir to Pakistan in the past month, a government official said today.

Farooq Haider, a Member of Parliament in the Pakistan-held area of Kashmir, said 8,000 people had crossed the snow-covered Himalayan foothills to escape Indian military and paramilitary forces on the other side of a 42-year-old ceasefire line.

The Indian government has denied the allegations of abuse and torture by its forces.

Most of the refugees live within 30 miles (45 kms) of the ceasefire line, a flashpoint of two border wars between Pakistan and India — in 1948 and again in 1965.

"We do not want another war between Pakistan and India," said Haider. "We want the issue settled in the United Nations but if India tries to crush the Muslims of Kashmir we will take up arms ... and break the night of India."

Jammu-Kashmir is the only state in India where Muslims are a majority. Most of India's 880 million people are Hindus.

Haider said the new refugees accused Indian forces of torture, rape and kidnapping. "They had to escape to save their lives," he contended.

Refugees said Indian forces accused them of harbouring Muslim separatists.

India has repeatedly accused Pakistan of training and arming the militants, a charge regularly denied by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government.

The turbulent state of Jammu-Kashmir is part of a larger Kashmir divided between India and Pakistan after British colonial rule ended in 1947.

Scores of people have died in secessionist violence in Jammu-Kashmir since Jan 20 when Indian troops launched a crackdown on the Muslim militants, who want either an independent Kashmir or to be united with Pakistan.

In addition, about a dozen people have died in recent weeks of exposure from slogging through knee-deep snow to cross into Pakistan, said Haider, who heads a newly established relief committee to organise refugee assistance.

He said tent villages will be set up in the next week in the valleys of Pakistan-held Kashmir. He also said appeals for assistance would be made to the International Committee for the Red Cross and the United Nations.

The human rights commission also will be asked to investigate the claims of abuse by the refugees, said Haider.

Most of the refugees have come in the last 12 days, Haider said. "There are reports of new people coming every day," he said. "There are as many as 200 to 250 a day."

Arabs uphold Iraqi execution

Bazoft affair trap to damage ties

TUNIS, March 26. (Agencies): Arab states said today they fully supported Iraq against Western criticism of its execution of London-based journalist Farzad Bazoft after conviction on spying charges.

"The council (of the Arab League) proclaims its complete solidarity with Iraq in the defence of its sovereignty and national security," said a statement issued after a meeting of Arab ambassadors in Tunis.

"The spy Farzad Bazoft (was) convicted for spying for foreign secret services, as established by his confessions to Iraqi justice, after a trial which conformed to internationally recognised legal rules," it added.



Indians back

Members of Indian peacekeeping forces arrive in Madras, India, after pulled out from Sri Lanka. 2,000 men, the last of an original contingent of some 50,000 left for home after a two-and-a-half-year operation to put down a separatist revolt by the Tamil rebels under a pact between Colombo and New Delhi. (See Page 2) (Reuter wirephoto)

Cong (I) govts fall in Goa, Meghalaya

NEW DELHI, March 26. (UPI): The Congress (I) Party of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi saw more of its once-powerful political empire erode today with the collapse of state governments in southern Goa and northeastern Meghalaya.

The latest blows to the one-time political juggernaut of the Gandhi-Nehru family came less than a month after the party lost control of five states in local elections and exactly four months after it was defeated in a national election by Prime Minister V.P. Singh's National Front alliance.

The demises of a Congress (I) Party administration in Goa and a coalition led by the organisation in Meghalaya left it in command of only seven of 25 states, none of its traditional stronghold of northern India, the nation's most politically influential region.

Only five years ago, during the first year of Rajiv's five-year term, his party controlled more than half of the states and held record majorities in both houses of the Parliament.

Though neither Goa nor Meghalaya wield significant political power in national affairs because of their tiny populations, their losses signalled a further erosion of the party's strength, attributed by experts to Rajiv's poor leadership, pro-rich image, and inability to dispel allegations of corruption. The party has also been badly torn by factional infighting.

In Goa, a former Portuguese colony on India's southern Arabian Sea coast, Pratapsingh Rane resigned as chief minister only hours before the 40-seat legislature was scheduled to hold a vote of no-confidence on his administration.

The government was plunged into crisis on Saturday, when seven Congress (I) Party members led by assembly Speaker Luis Proto Barbosa staged an unexpected revolt, quitting the organisation and forming the Goan People's Party.

NEWSWATCH

Direct rule

NEW DELHI, March 26. (Reuter): India's government will ask parliament to extend Delhi's direct rule over Punjab, imposed in 1987, for another six months while it tries to curb Sikh separatist violence in the northern border state.

A government spokesman said politicians at an all-party meeting called by Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh today felt Punjab was still not ready to elect a new state assembly.

Soviet flights

SEOUL, March 26. (AP): The Soviet Union's national airline, Aeroflot, has decided to add a stop in Shanghai when it starts service on Thursday between Moscow and Seoul, Korean Air said.

Korean Air officials said today that Aeroflot informed the South Korean flag carrier of its decision in a cable over the weekend.

US accuses Burma

BANGKOK, March 26. (Reuter): A senior official today accused the Burmese government of aiding drug lords in the Golden Triangle who are flooding the West with record quantities of heroin.

Weather

FAIR weather with light to moderate north westerly wind and some clouds will appear.

State of sea: Slight to moderate

High water: 11.30 am, 12.20 pm

Low water: 6.28 am, 6.43 pm

Sunrise: 5.44 am

Sunset: 6.03 pm

Maximum temperatures recorded:

Kuala: 27°C 81°F

Almadi: 24°C 75°F

Falaka: 27°C 81°F

Minimum temperatures recorded:

Kuala: 11°C 52°F

Almadi: 14°C 57°F

Falaka: 15°C 59°F

Maximum temperatures expected:

Kuala: 27°C 81°F

Almadi: 25°C 77°F

Falaka: 26°C 79°F

Maximum humidity recorded:

Kuala: 45 per cent

Almadi: 45 per cent

Falaka: 48 per cent



Enrile confers with lawyer

Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, facing charges of rebellion and murder confers with his lawyer Ranao Cayetano (right) at a trial court in Manila. (Reuter wirephoto)

Floods kill 69

JAMMU, India, March 26. (Reuter): Flash floods have killed at least 69 people in India's northern Jammu and Kashmir state in the past week, police said today.

Too many bicycles

HONG KONG, March 26. (Reuter): More than 10 million brand new bicycles are stuck in shops all over China because factories are churning out too many.

Thatcher faces the axe

LONDON, March 26. (Kuna): Flash floods have killed at least 69 people in India's northern Jammu and Kashmir state in the past week, police said today.

She has until the Conservative Party conference in October to restore their fortunes or "face the axe," according to the popular newspaper "Today."

Observers noted that the British government was heading for another difficult week, following the continued slump in the Thatcher government's popularity.

End to hostage crisis likely: Fadlallah

BEIRUT, March 26. (AP): Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, the nation's most influential Shiite Muslim cleric, was quoted today as saying there are "positive elements" in the issue of the Western hostages in Lebanon.

"There are positive elements, within the context of what we detect through media reports in more than one place, that suggest elements of a solution exist in the hostage crisis," Fadlallah said.

Fadlallah, spiritual guide to the pro-Iranian Hezbollah, made his remarks in an interview with the pro-Syrian Ash-Sharq newspaper.

Questioned about reports that he was formally asked to help find a solution to the issue

of the hostages, Fadlallah said: "There is no truth to this."

Fadlallah's latest statement has been hammering home the point that no one has asked him to intervene to do this, but he has never said whether he would respond positively or negatively if asked.

Asked whether he was contacted about the hostages when former US president Jimmy Carter was in Damascus, Fadlallah said: "There is no connection at all ... because I am not involved directly or indirectly in the core of the problem," he said, adding:

"But I always try to raise responsible words, with which I address those concerned with this issue, in order that this case be closed once and for all."

Fadlallah visited Damascus during Carter's visit to the Syrian capital earlier this month. Diplomatic sources said the two did not meet.

Fadlallah's remarks came four days after his press office released a terse statement quoting the cleric as saying when asked about the possibility of a hostage release in a radio interview:

"A new situation has emerged, but I don't know when, how or where." The statement did not elaborate.

Fadlallah's remarks have heightened speculation that there is movement in efforts to secure the release of 18 Western hostages missing in Lebanon, most believed held by groups linked to Hezbollah.



Jozsef Antall



Miklos Nemeth

Forum wins polls in Hungary

BUDAPEST, March 26. (UPI): The Hungarian Democratic Forum, an anti-Communist Party launched by dissidents 18 months ago, emerged the apparent winner in the nation's first free multi-party elections in more than four decades, returns showed today.

Voters in the first round of parliamentary elections yesterday rejected the old-line Communist Party, which received little more than three per cent of the votes.

The Hungarian Socialist Party, the former communist party which renamed itself last fall and came out for parliamentary democracy, did only a little better with about 10 per cent.

The results of yesterday's election will not determine the makeup of parliament because in many districts no candidate won a majority. Runoff elections will be held April 3.

With 54 per cent of the votes counted for the 152 county seats, the centre-right Forum whose leader in Jozsef Antall, garnered 24.53 per cent, followed by its chief rival, the Liberal Alliance of Free Democrats with 20.63 per cent.

Third place went to the Agrarian Independent Smallholders Party with 12.87 per cent, while the Socialist Party was fourth with 10.06 per cent.

The Young Democrats, the brass but independent ally of the Free Democrats, tallied 8.06 per cent.

The Old Hungarian Socialist Workers Party — the unrepentant communists — held 3.69 per cent, in indication it may not even be represented in the parliament it totally controlled for decades. The cutoff for a party to be represented in parliament is 4 per cent.

Prime Minister Miklos Nemeth, a Socialist Party member running as an independent, and three Forum deputies won re-election to parliament outright.

The Forum, with 25,000 members and 430 local branches, emerged on Sept 27, 1987, in the village of Lakitelek in southern Hungary, where 170 intellectuals met to discuss the worsening political situation.

Imre Pozsgay, the Reform Communist who also showed up at Lakitelek and subsequently led the drive to bury the Marxist one-party state system, came in third place in his own district and will participate in a runoff. But he said he didn't regret what he did.

"It does not serve peace at the present juncture. On the contrary it amounts to an obstacle to the peace process and encourages Israel to continue its inhumane oppression of Palestinian citizens," it added.



Boy with a cyanide capsule

A 11-year-old Tamil boy, wearing a cyanide capsule on a string around his neck, waits for a meal in a refugee camp in the eastern Indian state of Orissa where he has been given shelter. (Reuters wirephoto)

Tamil rebel women deadlier than men

TINNELVELI, Sri Lanka, March 26, (AP): With cyanide capsules around their necks and assault rifles ready to fire, the women guerrillas of the Tamil Tigers have moved out of the jungles and into the towns.

Following the withdrawal of Indian peacekeeping troops, the emergence of the Tiger women, who long have been talked about but less often seen, is jolting Tamil society in the Jaffna peninsula.

Violence has been rampant since the ethnic minority's separatist revolt began in 1983, but warfare generally was considered men's work.

"Our social fabric and lifestyle have been completely destroyed. It will never be the same after seeing these young girls carrying guns," said Velupillai Prabhakaran, a Tamil school teacher, echoing traditional beliefs that Tamil women should be shy and retiring.

Li Imelda, a 26-year-old commander of the female Tigers of Tamil Eelam, feels otherwise. She said she and her women cadres can handle not only their T-81 Chinese assault rifles and machine pistols, but also rocket launchers and anti-aircraft guns.

Her two-story headquarters was guarded during a recent visit by about 25 camouflage-clad Tiger women. They are armed with, but segregated from the male Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which fielded the biggest guerrilla force against the Sri Lankan Army and later the Indian peacekeeping force.

No men were in sight, and the rare male visitor is eyed with suspicion.

Woman held in Punjab murder

AMRITSAR, March 26, (Agencies): A 26-year-old Sikh separatist who posed as a journalist was arrested Saturday for her alleged role in the kidnapping and decapitation of a leading local politician, police said.

Jasmeet Kaur was charged with murdering Hardev Singh Babbar, a local Communist Party leader.

Babbar's head was found stuck on an iron gate of a government school in his village outside Amritsar on March 19. Since January, Sikh militants have killed more than 440 people to dramatize their demand for a separate nation in Punjab state in northern India.

Speaking at a news conference organized by police, Ms. Kaur said she introduced herself to Babbar on the evening of March 14 as a correspondent for a well-known New Delhi magazine. She said she told him she wanted a tour of India's border with Pakistan for a story on terrorism in Punjab state.

She spent the next two days with him, touring the border area with Babbar and his bodyguards. Occasionally, she offered Babbar alcoholic drinks and he let her drive the car, she said. On the night of March 16, she and Babbar drove alone to Amritsar and she handed him over to Sikh extremists, she said. A day later his head was found.

Babbar came from a Sikh family but he was clean shaven. One of the tenets of the Sikh faith is that male believers must let their hair and beards grow.

Babbar's assassination apparently was carried out as revenge, said Anil Sharma, senior superintendent of police in Maslha where the case was broken. Bodyguards of the Communist Party leader had killed two of the most wanted Sikh extremists in gun battles, Sharma said.

Sharma said extremists wanted to kill Babbar initially because he opposed their call for an independent Sikh nation. He said police were still looking for Kaur's accomplices.

Kaur said that to carry out the plan, Sikh extremists spent two months teaching her how to drive and instructing her in other details of the operation.

Violence has risen in recent weeks in Punjab. A bomb attack on Tuesday in Chandigarh that left 17 dead marked the first time in more than a year that Sikh nationalists have attacked that city.

Global detente bypasses South Asia

ISLAMABAD, March 26, (AP): Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto claimed on Sunday that the trend toward peace and disarmament that is sweeping the world has bypassed South Asia.

"It is nothing short of tragic that our region is yet to share the global trends towards detente and a new respect for the rights of people," Benazir told about 40 Pakistani diplomats from around the world.

Referring to India, she said "our eastern neighbour continues its policy of building up its military machine."

"The addition of new missile systems

and nuclear submarines, coupled with an across-the-board increase in defence outlay by the government of India, imposes a great burden on us," she said.

Contrary to our wishes, it engages our limited resources and circumscribes our economic initiatives."

Pakistan spends 52 per cent of its budget on military.

"Emboldened by its perceived military superiority, India has proceeded to let loose a reign of terror in Kashmir to suppress their movement for the right of self-determination," she said.

Muslims in India's Himalayan state of Jammu-Kashmir, which was split between India and Pakistan in the 1947 partition of the subcontinent, have been fighting for a merger with Pakistan's Kashmir for the last two months. It has left dozens dead and hundreds injured in the Indian part of Jammu-Kashmir.

Benazir said that in Afghanistan, more than a year after the departure of 105,000 Soviet troops, "the conflict between the government imposed upon the people of Afghanistan and the mujahideen is still raging."

"We are still saddled with the respon-

sibility of caring for three million Afghan refugees," which costs \$1 million a day, she said.

The international community and Pakistan have equally shared the cost for the last 10 years, but Islamabad is facing major cutbacks in the Western humanitarian assistance for the refugees from war-torn Afghanistan.

"We have to cope with these and other pressures in an economic setting which may become increasingly unfavourable. International assistance may considerably shrink in the years ahead," Benazir warned the ambassadors.

Probe into Airbus deal

'Rajiv administration paid kickbacks in jets sale': reports

NEW DELHI, March 26, (UPI): The Indian government said today it is looking into published reports that kickbacks were involved in the \$1.4 billion sale of 31 European-made A-320 Airbus passenger jets to the administration of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Civil Aviation Minister Arif Mohammed Khan made the announcement in reply to a question in the upper house of parliament on the purchase of 31 A-320 aircraft from French-based Airbus Industries.

The minister said the government is looking into news reports that

said that kickbacks were paid in the 1986 sale of 19 A-320s and a June 1989 order for another 12 planes under an option in the first purchase.

There were no immediate comments on Khan's statement from either the former ruling party or Airbus Industries.

The reports of alleged kickbacks appeared in several Indian news publications following the Feb 14 crash of an Indian Airlines-owned A-320 outside the southern city of Bangalore in which 90 people died.

The cause of the disaster has not been revealed.



Funeral parlour aides carry the body of the slain communist rebel after a gunbattle with soldiers in Manila. (Reuters wirephoto)

Anti-coup group formed in Manila

MANILA, March 26, (Reuters): A group of moderate politicians has launched an anti-coup campaign in the Philippines, vowing to organise street demonstrations and road blockades to thwart any army attempt to seize power.

"We will stand up and fight," Senate president Jovito Salonga said yesterday at the founding congress in Manila of the group, called Tindig (stand up for democracy against coup d'etat).

The moderate Liberal Party, headed by Salonga and a member of President Corason Aquino's ruling coalition, organised the group after army rebels warned of a new coup attempt soon.

Aquino last December survived the sixth and most serious rebellion in her four years in office.

Party officials said the group had initially recruited 70,000 members nation-wide and planned to mount "people power" demonstrations like those

that swept Aquino to the presidency, if army rebels tried to launch another coup.

Party spokesman Raul Daza said members also planned to set up barricades to prevent rebel troop movements in case of another coup attempt.

"If a coup succeeds, Tindig will organise underground activities until the military government falls," said an anti-coup primer distributed at the congress. It did not say what the activities would be.

Salonga, addressing a crowd of 15,000 people who attended the founding meeting at the suburban Araneta Coliseum, accused the military dissidents of being power-hungry.

A single-engine airplane crashed in a mountain area on its way to Clark Air Base killing four American passengers, including the pilot, officials said today.

Following the crash, the government grounded all of the remaining A-320s and ordered experts to investigate the safety of the planes and the efficiency of the ground infrastructure at Indian airports.

Khan told members of the upper house that state-owned Indian Airlines had signed in July 1984 a letter of intent to buy 12 Boeing 757 planes from US-based Boeing Co., but later cancelled the deal in favour of Airbus Industries.

Khan said the Rajiv administration, which was driven from power in late November elections by the National Front coalition of Prime Minister V.P. Singh, decided that the European-built planes were more fuel-efficient.

However, he said that Indian Airlines frequently faced problems with the aircraft like smoke in the cabin and snags with its pressurisation and hydraulic systems.

Pilots also have complained that the aircraft have sometimes lost power while descending, suffered computer malfunctions and that its advanced technology gave no option to cockpit crews to override the computer command in emergencies.

India Today magazine reported that official documents indicated that the Rajiv government pushed through the Airbus deal with arbitrariness and undue haste, ignoring other options as well as warnings about the inadequacy of India's ground support systems.

The magazine reported that Indian Airlines and the Civil Aviation Ministry altered air traffic projections and the nature of the fleet requirements to favour the European planes and that a fresh offer from Boeing was spurned.

The A-320 selection was made by selected senior officials in contrast to the usual practice of rigorous examination by an expert committee, said the magazine, adding the Boeing-757 planes were rejected on the basis of data provided by unknown sources.

Seoul and Mongolia start full relations

SEOUL, March 26, (AP): South Korea and Mongolia have agreed to establish full diplomatic relations, South Korea's Foreign Ministry announced today.

South Korea and the Soviet Union have also agreed in principle to exchange permanent missions as a prelude to formal diplomatic ties, a leading newspaper said today.

The accord was signed today in the Mongolian capital of Ulan Bator between South Korean assistant Foreign Minister Lee Kie-Joo and Mongolian first Vice-Foreign Minister Yondon, ministry officials said.

Mongolia became the sixth socialist country to establish formal ties with capitalist South Korea after Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. Mongolia maintains diplomatic ties with communist North Korea, an archrival of South Korea.

The ministry officials said South Korea and Mongolia also planned to sign agreements to promote trade, economic and technical co-operation and cultural exchanges.

Kano gets prison term

TOKYO, March 26, (AP): A former Labour Ministry official today became the first person sentenced in the Recruit affair, a major political bribery scandal that has rocked Japanese politics for more than a year.

Shigeru Kano, 56, was sentenced to one year in prison today, an official at the Tokyo district court said. The former head of the ministry's job security division, Kano was also fined 1.35 million yen (\$8,700).

Judge Akimori Matsumoto suspended the prison term for three years, meaning that it will not be imposed if Kano commits no other offences during that period.

The judge said Kano had "maintained a corrupt relationship with Recruit Co. without reservations, and should be held responsible for being repeatedly entertained from the company."

Boom in next two years: Ershad

DHAKA, March 26, (Agencies): President Hossain Mohammad Ershad today said Bangladesh's economy was rebounding and forecast food sufficiency and an industrial boom for the impoverished country in the next two years.

"Those who say that we are facing an economic crisis are looking at us negatively," he said in a message marking his country's 19th independence anniversary.

Ershad said the country hoped to attain a record food output target of 19 million tonnes in the current year against the previous highest of 16.6 million tonnes in 1987.

Many more industries, he said, would be established under a new industrial policy.

"In fact the economy is rebounding, no matter what the critics would say. If we can keep the current pace, we shall have sufficient in food and have an industrial boom by 1992," Ershad said.

Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest nations with annual per capita income of \$170, announced early this month that its foreign exchange reserves had dropped to \$450 million, barely enough for one month's imports.

Following the announcement, the Central Bank devalued the currency, the taka, by 4.99 per cent against the US dollar.

In spite of economic hardship, Ershad donated a \$100,000 contribution to complete Rome's great mosque, an official said in Rome today.

Director of the Islamic Centre in Rome Abdelqayyum Khan told Kuna that Ershad presented his donation in the name of Bangladesh to finalise construction of such a great Islamic project in Italy.

A rain-swollen river burst its embankments and triggered flash floods that inundated about 10,000 people in northeastern Bangladesh, a newspaper said today.

The Khawarij River, which runs down the hills from neighbouring India, overflowed Sunday morning after two days of non-stop rain, the Bengali-language Ittefaq newspaper said.

Beijing parliament met with disdain

BEIJING, March 26, (UPI): The ongoing session of China's nominal parliament is being greeted with disdain by cynical Beijing residents, who say they expect no significant policy changes and are thus ignoring the entire proceedings.

"The National People's Congress is just fanfare and a show to convince the audience that the whole congress is supporting the central government," said an elderly intellectual.


"But this government is purely maintained at gunpoint, not on people's votes as in the West."

Chinese interviewed in the capital, where many residents are still simmering over last spring's violent crackdown on dissident, expressed unanimous contempt for the ongoing session of the NPC, China's rubber-stamp legislature.

"Why do foreign journalists even bother covering the NPC?" Asked an artist in disgust. "We don't pay any attention to it at all."

The annual two-week session opened March 20 with a headline keynote address by Premier Li Peng in which the unpopular leader declared the Communist Party would never relax its grip on power and warned further dissent would be crushed.

Li also called for strengthened Marxist indoctrination, but said the government would ease an ongoing economic austerity programme to avoid a deep recession.



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PEOPLE AND PLACES

TAMPA, Florida: "Batman" and Redcliffe director Tim Burton is being deliberately vague about his latest project — Edward Scissorhands, a suburban fantasy film about a man created with shears of metal for fingers.

"It's very different," Burton said. "We're going to sort of make it up as we go along."

Burton and stars Johnny Depp, Dianne Wiest and Winona Ryder arrived here Thursday to start three months of production on the film, scheduled for Christmas release.

According to 20th Century Fox, Scissorhands is about a man who was created, not born. He was given everything he needed to lead a full life, except one thing: His inventor's untimely death left Edward with sharp shears of metal where his fingers should have been. (AP)

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas: Libby Swindle's idea of a 40th birthday celebration is to climb a mountain, ten times in a single day.

"I thought of a half-marathon or a cruise, but I thought this would be more fun," Swindle said after completing her eighth circuit of the 1.5-mile (3.5-metre) trail up Pinnacle Mountain.

The climb began at 5:45 am Wednesday, part of her tradition of climbing the West Summit trail at Pinnacle Mountain state park at Sunrise. Each time she returned to the base, more friends and relatives had arrived to cheer her on. (AP)



Tourist attraction

Tourists climb the stairs to the 18th Prussian imperial palace of Sans Souci in Potsdam outside Berlin, on March 25. Sans Souci is a new tourist attraction for West Germans after the borders between the two German countries fell on Nov 9, 1989. (Reuters wirephoto)

Broccoli

I'm not goin' to eat: Bush

WASHINGTON, March 26, (Reuters): The big white tractor-trailer crisscrossed slowly, ominously past the White House yesterday, loaded with broccoli, the vegetable US President George Bush hates.

"I do not like broccoli. I haven't liked it since I was little kid and my mother made me eat it. And I'm president of the United States and I'm not going to eat it any more," Bush said in a unique declaration of independence on Tuesday.

The rhubarb began when Bush banned broccoli from the presidential aircraft, complaining it continually turned up on his plate even though he never ate it. But the President's refusal to eat his vegetables mushroomed into a contest of wills as California growers dispatched a truckload to Washington.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida: The United States launched the seventh in a series of US Navstar communications satellites aboard a Delta 2 rocket on Sunday night, the air force said.

The satellites, designed primarily for use by US and allied military forces, are said by the Pentagon to be capable of pinpointing locations on the ground or at any altitude to within 50 feet (15 metres) regardless of weather conditions. (Reuters)

CAMDEN, New Jersey: The trial for an Aids-infected inmate charged with attempted murder for allegedly biting a guard begins this week, marking what some observers call an example of ignorance about the disease.

Jury selection in the trial of Gregory Smith, 26, begins Monday in superior court before Judge John Mariano. Testimony is to begin April 2. (AP)



Congratulatory kiss

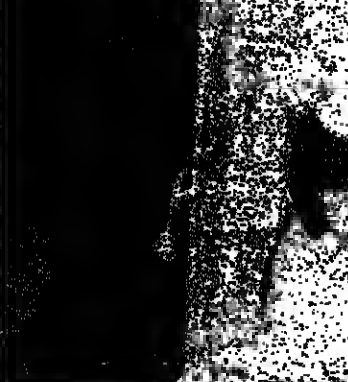
The Princess of Wales kisses the Duke of York on the cheek upon her arrival at Portland Hospital on March 25. The princess who has just returned from a visit to Africa, visited the Duchess of York and her new-born baby. (Reuters wirephoto)

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota: Eileen Mondale, daughter of former US Vice-president Walter Mondale, resigned from her job as a television entertainment reporter just days before a local magazine was due to publish an article called, "Walter and Joan's wild child."

Ms. Mondale denied she was forced out after only eight months at WCCO-TV, the Star Tribune of Minneapolis reported Thursday.

"I'm not upset," she said Wednesday. "I had to make some decisions on how I want to live my life."

"The resignation is definitely her choice," said WCCO news director John Callahan. "She may have a lot of reasons mixed in there about how she feels about us, but it is her choice." (AP)



'La Belle Epiciere' (Reuters wirephoto)

Paris art sale shatters records

PARIS, March 26, (Reuters): A collection of paintings gathered by a Parisian couple who ignored the advice of friends and art experts shattered individual world records yesterday when sold as part of an auction which also set a Paris record total.

Auction officials said Lucien and Marcelle Bourdon's collection, which included works by Picasso, Matisse and Degas, fetched an estimated total of 300 million francs (\$52 million), setting four individual world records.

The auction, which included a selection of works from other collections, raised a total of 386.2 million francs (\$102 million) the highest at a Paris auction.

The money will go to charities for animals and handicapped children. World records at the auction, at which Japanese customers placed bids via a satellite linkup with Tokyo, included Italian painter Amedeo Modigliani's "The Pretty Shopkeeper," which went for 63 million francs.

TOKYO: A US software company has agreed with Japan's largest computer manufacturer Fujitsu Ltd. to adapt its high-speed network system to Fujitsu Computers, the two companies announced Monday.

Ultra Network Technologies Inc. based in San Jose, California, will join Fujitsu and Tokyo Electronics Ltd., the American company's representative in Japan, to configure its ultranet system to work on Fujitsu's supercomputer VP200 and its general use model groups M-780 and M-760 by the last quarter of 1990, they said. (AP)

NASHVILLE, Tennessee: The Tennessee state museum has an "incredible opportunity" to show paintings by such masters as Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Monet and Picasso if it comes up with \$800,000 by Friday.

The Bridgestone Museum told the state a year ago that the priceless works would be available for loan, but that the state has to pay \$800,000.

The money would go for such things as proper crating, insurance, security, shipping and care while on display, officials said.

The 60 works of art, largely impressionist in style, were made available in Tennessee by the Labat Foundation, owner of the Bridgestone Museum in Tokyo. (UPI)



Visiting mom

The Duke of York bends to pose with his first child Princess Beatrix as they arrive to see his wife, the Duchess of York at the Portland Hospital, London, on March 25. (Reuters wirephoto)

Record haul

Robbers raid Swiss bank

GENEVA, March 26, (AP): Four armed robbers raided a bank in downtown Geneva early yesterday and got away with 35 million Swiss francs (\$26.3 million) in banknotes of various currencies, police reported.

Police spokesman Marcel Vaudroz said the haul, at the main Geneva office of Union Bank, Switzerland's biggest, was believed to be the largest in Swiss history.

He said the gangsters, between 35 and 50 years old, wearing no masks, and speaking fluent French, arrived at the personnel entrance before 8:00 am and forced two security guards at gun point to yield the door keys.

Inside, they held up a bank employee and a cleaning woman. All four were tied and gagged.

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama: Hank Williams Jr. will donate proceeds from a concert to help flood victims in southeast Alabama, a childhood playground for the country and Western singer, his manager said.

Merle Kilgore said Wednesday that Williams will donate his concert fee and concession sales from an April 1 concert in Birmingham to the people of Elba. They hope to raise more than \$100,000, Kilgore said.

High waters swept away parts of a levee surrounding Elba last weekend and inundated the town. (AP)

NEW ORLEANS: The Reverend Daniel Berrigan must pay a \$500 fine for contempt of court by Monday and cannot put off payment while he appeals the citation, a federal judge said.

The 68-year-old anti-war activist was among 24 people convicted of disruption in a federal building during a December 1 sit-in protesting US military aid to El Salvador.

US district Judge Peter Beer found Berrigan in contempt of court and fined him \$500 on February 8 for failing to appear for his arraignment December 14. (AP)

Ozone contributing to skin cancer

DAYTONA BEACH, Florida, March 26, (UPI): The depletion of earth's ozone layer apparently is contributing to a dramatic increase in an often deadly form of skin cancer in the United States, researchers warned.

Dr. Darell Rigel said the incidence of melanoma has increased 1,250 per cent since 1935, and by the year 2000 an estimated one in 90 of 1,500 Americans will develop melanoma during their lifetimes, as opposed to only one in 1,500 in the 1930s, Rigel said.

Doctors believe one cause is a decrease of between 3 per cent and 7 per cent in the protective ozone layer that filters the sun's

damaging ultraviolet rays. Rigel, of New York University, told an American Cancer Society seminar yesterday.

Unlike the more common forms of skin cancer, which are easily cured, melanoma often resists treatment once it has spread.

There will be an expected 27,600 new cases of melanoma in the United States this year, killing 6,300 people. Once extremely rare, melanoma is now the country's ninth most common form of cancer, increasing faster than any other form of the disease, Rigel said.

A study by Rigel's research group found six primary risk factors for melanoma, including light hair, freckling, a family

history of the disease and the presence of red, rough skin marks from sun exposure.

Two other factors that predispose people to melanoma are blistering sunburns and outdoor jobs during teenage years. Rigel said, "It's not a good idea to get sunburn," he said, "but it is even worse to get a sunburn before the age of 20."

Rigel said those with three or more risk factors are up to 25 times more likely to develop melanoma than others. For that reason, he said, it is important for everyone, especially young people, to avoid "intense bursts of sun" that cause blistering sunburns.

Those at risk for melanoma also should

remember that it can take years to develop, he said, so the increased rate seen during the 1980s reflects "what people did in the 1960s and 1970s, not what they are doing today."

For those who develop melanoma, early diagnosis is a key to survival. The survival rate for those with small tumours detected early is 98 per cent, but it drops to 53 per cent once the tumour has grown.

He said there appears to be a clear cause and effect between ozone loss and increased melanoma mortality. He calculated that a 7 per cent ozone loss may translate into a nearly 10 per cent increase in mortality.

Fendi sisters challenge critics

MILAN, Italy, March 26, (Reuters): Italy's five Fendi sisters, lambasted by animal activists as the fashion world's top furriers, are out to save their skins.

Eager to defeat a world-wide lobby strongest in the United States, the Roman sisters have defiantly challenged their vocal critics with a huge and luxurious store on New York's Fifth Avenue.

Demonstrators draped in pelts splashed with red varnish chanted "Fendi sells blood" when the doors to the flagship store — which boasts golden and black marble floors and a crystal lift — were thrown open late last year.

On sale next in Fendi's lines of ready-to-wear clothes, handbags and other luxury goods, was the kind of fur which makes animal rights activists see red — an ermine coat worth \$200,000.

The Fendi sisters outlined their strategy against their critics at Milan's autumn-winter fashion shows this month when they paraded a range of skilfully camouflaged, but still precious, pelts.

Sparking their way through the renaissance arches of a spotlit palace courtyard, Fendi's models showed off mink, golden sables and summer ermine — but each design was reversible, and many were worn with the fur on the inside.

Fake pelts rubbed shoulders with the real thing, and the sisters camouflaged the furthest of a squirrel jacket by weaving in tufts of wool all over it. Amateur burglars might not give them a second glance.

Not that pelts are on their way out — far from it, says Carla Fendi, who spearheaded the \$8 million assault on Fifth Avenue.

"Everybody's free to think what they want. America's beautiful because of that. But a woman will always have her vanity. You can't tell her to throw her fur away just because it's an animal's skin."

"It's like telling a man to throw away his Ferrari just because we can't get rid of industrial waste."

Instead Fendi is seeking to make its furs more like any other throw-on garment.



Caroline at bail

Princess Caroline of Monaco dances with her brother, Albert, during the opening of the traditional 'Bali da la Rose' at the Sporting Club of Monte Carlo in Monaco. (Reuters wirephoto)

Hundred 'Uncle Oscars'

LOS ANGELES, March 26, (Reuters): One hundred of the coveted golden statuettes named Oscar have been cast, moulded, polished and buffed for Hollywood's top awards later tonight.

Although there are only 23 winning categories, the organisers do not know how many people will share awards and each receives a statuette.

Oscar's vital statistics: weight — 8 pounds 7 ounces (4 kg); height — 1 foot 1-1/2 inches (35 cm). The golden gentleman is cast in gold-plated Britannia.

The 15 Oscars presented at the first ceremony, in 1926, were made of solid bronze.

And how did Oscar receive his name? According to Hollywood legend, a librarian at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1931, Margaret Herrick, said the statuette reminded her of her uncle Oscar. The name stuck.



Tattoo convention

At the fourth National Tattoo Association convention, Bernie Moeller, 1990 holder of the Guinness Book record for most tattoos with 8,960, tattoos a biker skull head, on the arm of Ken Strayer. (Reuters wirephoto)

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Hospital to save kids from Satanism

CHICAGO, March 26, (AP): Mike once lived in a black-painted room that was decorated with black candles, obituaries and satanic symbols. When he ventured out, it was to drive recklessly, drink heavily and threaten his parents.

That's when Mike ended up in one of the nation's first treatment programmes aimed at weaning disturbed teenagers from satanism. There, counsellors focus not only on losing satan but on a person's finding his strengths.

"At the time, satanism seemed to have, for Mike, a lot of answers that he couldn't find elsewhere," said Michael Weiss, a psychologist who specialises in treating adolescents. "It gave him the sense that he could control all things."

"Now that he can find other ways to feel good and have some sense of purpose ... he seems increasingly willing to put aside any satanic influence," said Weiss, of Hartgrove hospital in Chicago.

Mike — not his real name — is among about a half dozen youths, ranging from ages 14 to 17, who've received treatment or are undergoing therapy at Hartgrove's Centre for the treatment of ritualistic deviance.

The centre, attached to the hospital's adolescent unit, began receiving patients in October. The in-patient programme lasts four to eight weeks, and involves individual as well as group therapy.

The programme comes in response to rising concern over young people's involvement in satanism. Many rock bands deck themselves out in satanic regalia and shriek occult lyrics. Although many teenagers may adopt satanism only as a fad, there also have been grisly, widely publicised killings with satanic overtones in recent years, including the dismemberment and boiling of a Swiss dancer last fall by a New Yorker.

Oscars tension reigns

'Miss Daisy' sure winner

LOS ANGELES, March 26, (Reuters): The film "Driving Miss Daisy" could sweep the Oscars tonight with awards for best picture and for its two stars, 80-year-old Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman — if the betting odds for Hollywood's top honours are on target.

Stars and studio heads, who have pumped an estimated \$9 million into promoting films they distributed, took bets at Oscar eve parties as final rehearsals went on for Hollywood's highest night of the year.

Oscar presenters Tom Hanks, Dan Aykroyd, Paula Abdul, Tom Selleck, Gregory Peck, Jane Fonda, Jeff Bridges and Jessica Tandy playfully practised their corny award introductions yesterday.

About 500 family, friends and related hangers-on settled into the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to hear the patter.

This year's show will feature muted tones and conservative production numbers. In one of the most daring departures from tradition, Bugs Bunny will present the Oscar for best animated short film.

Fans were already camping out in bleachers outside the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, scene of this year's Academy Awards ceremony, 30 hours before the show starts.

The ceremony will eventually be seen by a billion television viewers in 90 countries.

Actresses were having final fittings for gowns, many kept secret until the event, and studios have prepared up to 200 different television commercials and newspaper advertisements, all congratulating their stars on winning.

The pressure was building on everyone from the stars nominated for best actor and actress to people hoping to win an Oscar for a documentary.

"The atmosphere just becomes tighter and tighter. It is going to be explosive tonight," said Elizabeth McBride.

nominated for best costume design for "Driving Miss Daisy."

It is a different Oscar show than the first presentation in 1926 when 14 men and actress Janet Gaynor collected their awards in four minutes and 22 seconds. This year the show is expected to last 3 1/2 hours.

Oddsmakers in Las Vegas have "Driving Miss Daisy," the gentle story of a growing friendship between a Jewish matron and her black chauffeur in the US South, as an even money favourite to win the Oscar for best picture.

This is followed by "Born on the Fourth of July," the story of ex-marine Ron Kovic who came back from the Vietnam war in a wheelchair and became an anti-war crusader, at 6-5, the Irish film "My Left Foot" at 3-1, "Dead Poets Society" at 4-1 and "Field of Dreams" at 5-1.

Freeman, the quiet, dignified chauffeur who drives Miss Daisy, is an even-money favourite with Tom Cruise, who portrays Kovic, for the Oscar presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for best actor.

Tandy would be the oldest performer to win an Oscar while Freeman would be the first black since 1964 to win an Academy Award for best actor.

Freeman and Cruise are followed by British actor Daniel Day-Lewis, who portrays the feisty Irish writer and painter crippled by cerebral palsy in "My Left Foot", at 6-5 odds, comedian Robin Williams for Dead Poets Society at 3-1 and British Shakespearean actor Kenneth Branagh, who directed himself in William Shakespeare's "Henry V", at 5-1.

Tandy, wife of her stage partner Hume Cronyn, is an even favourite for best actress for her role of Miss Daisy.

Irish actress Brenda Fricker, who played the indomitable mother of Christy Brown in "My Left Foot", is the 6-5 favourite to win an Oscar for best supporting actress.

HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

Islam Presentation Committee would like to wish you all a blessed month of Ramadan.

NOTE: IPC is going to postpone its program: "What is Islam" till after Eid.

For more information call 2452628

Or write to: I.P.C., P.O. Box 1613, Safar 13017.

The British Council

The British Council has a vacancy for a full-time Assistant Librarian, to be responsible for the day-to-day running of a busy lending library.

Applicants should have academic or professional qualifications in library and information studies and at least two years' relevant work experience

Knowledge of Arabic and experience in using personal computers would be an advantage. Applications should be sent by post to reach the British Council not later than 4th April with CV and names and addresses of two referees to:

The Representative's Secretary
The British Council
P.O. Box 345
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INTERNATIONAL

Charges against Honecker dropped

EAST BERLIN, March 26, (Agencies): East Germany's state prosecutors said today charges of treason against former communist leader Erich Honecker and three of his top aides will be dropped, the official ADN news agency reported.

It cited the Prosecutor General's office as saying the charges could not be sustained but investigations into other crimes during their headline rule would continue. The others named were Honecker, former state security Minister Erich Mielke, Economic Chief Guenter Mittag and Joachim Herrmann, head of propaganda. All were ousted during last October and November's peaceful revolution.

The leader of East Germany's Social Democratic Party continues to deny he was an informer for the communist secret police, but he said today he would temporarily step down because of the allegations.

The embattled party leader, Ibrahim Bohme, also told a news conference he would not assume his seat in the new 400-seat parliament until the allegations have been investigated and dismissed.

Bohme, whose party finished a distant second in East Germany's first free election March 18, is the latest of several politicians to come under suspicion of hav-

ing collaborated with the Stasi secret police.

Lothar de Maiziere, the likely new premier whose Christian Democratic Union won the election, is fighting similar allegations. De Maiziere has strongly denied reports that he was a long-time Stasi informer.

The swirl of allegations is stalling efforts to form East Germany's first democratically elected government and has overshadowed the country's first week as a democracy.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) said today East German attempts to form a government must

not be delayed by accusations of collaboration with the hated Stasi security police.

"All chances should be used to form a grand coalition government in East Germany," CDU Secretary-General Volker Ruehe said after a meeting of the party leadership.

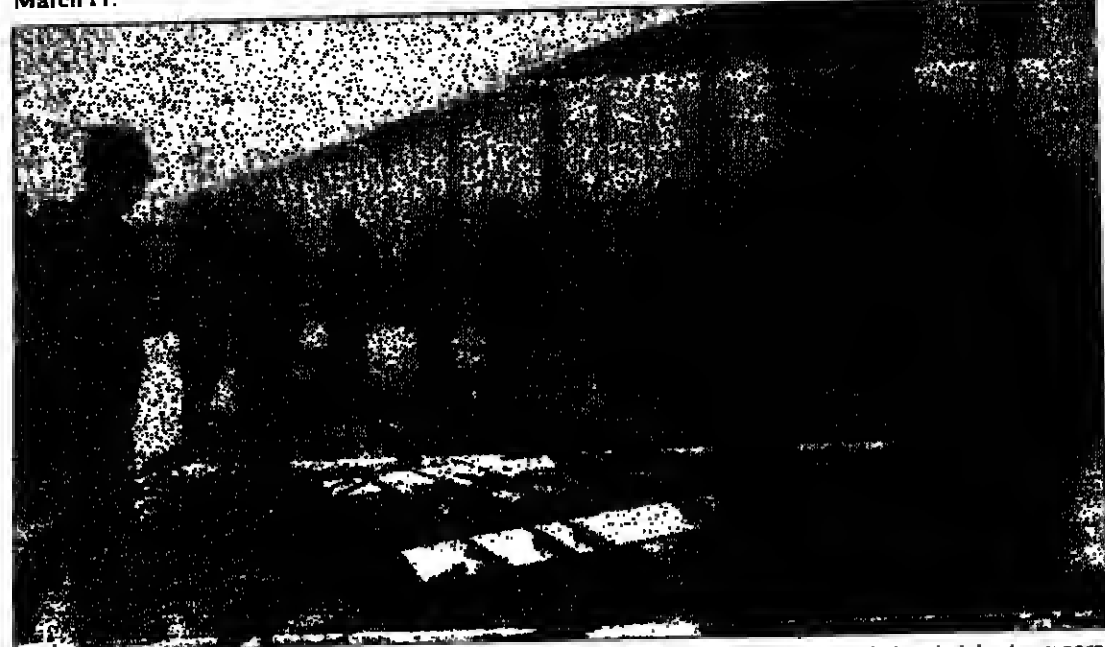
President Francois Mitterrand said yesterday that West Germany had taken too long in formally recognising the legitimacy of the existing European borders, but he insisted that there were no major policy differences between Bonn and Bonn and restated his support for German reunification.

Gorby hints at use of force in Lithuania

Issue can hurt ties with Moscow, warns US

MOSCOW, March 26, (Agencies): Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev today indicated the Soviet Union might be prepared to use force in breakthrough Lithuania if lives were threatened but stressed his commitment to a peaceful solution.

US Senator Edward Kennedy told correspondents after a meeting with Gorbachev, the Kremlin leader had spent most of their 90-minute session discussing Lithuania, which declared its independence on March 11.



A Soviet military paratrooper shows a gun, one of many, confiscated from local voluntary associations helping to prepare youth for military service. (Reuter wirephoto)

'Lithuania would affect arms talks': US

WASHINGTON, March 26, (AP): US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said yesterday that a Soviet military crackdown in Lithuania would have "significant negative consequences" on arms control and other US-Soviet relations.

Cheney said any use of force to crush Lithuania's independence movement "obviously would undermine a lot of the good work that's been done in recent years."

"We'd like to see the Lithuanians ... granted the same prerogative that the East Germans were: 'Self-determination,'" Cheney told the CBS television network on its programme "Face The Nation."

Cheney said "an overt use of Soviet military force to crush the Lithuanians would ... have significant negative consequences in terms of US-Soviet relations."

Cheney said elections in Eastern Europe and Soviet troop withdrawals had been "very positive developments that enhance prospects for arms control agreements and improved relationships."

A military crackdown in Lithuania could reverse that, he warned.

Bush's National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, said Saturday that any Soviet use of force "would be counterproductive" and that the United States "would not ignore it."

Soviet paratroopers armed with machine guns took over two Communist Party schools yesterday in Vilnius. They met no resistance and the capital otherwise was reported calm.

The White House had no immediate reaction to the seizure of the buildings, spokesman Bill Harlow said.

President George Bush ignored reporters' shouted questions about Lithuania as he returned to the White House yesterday from a retreat outside Washington.

Bush said Friday that any Soviet attempt to "intimidate or forcibly intervene against the Lithuanian people is bound to backfire."

Gorbachev's remarks came as Soviet military officials refused to pull out paratroopers from key points in Lithuania.

In the continuing war of nerves between Lithuanian leaders and Moscow, the Kremlin sent troops to seize a series of public buildings, including the Communist Party headquarters.

The White House said today that US-Soviet relations could be damaged by "further actions" by Moscow in Lithuania and said it was unhappy that Soviet troops had seized buildings in the Baltic republic.

"Further actions will not lead to lessening of tensions and could have adverse international repercussions and could be counterproductive to US-Soviet relations," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said.

Fitzwater said the United States was "heartened" by repeated public and private assurances from Moscow, including diplomatic messages over the weekend, that the Soviet Union will not use force to block Lithuania's bid for independence.

He repeated President George Bush's declaration of Friday that coercion or intimidation was "bound to backfire."

He declined to say whether the military occupation over the weekend of several buildings belonging to Lithuania's breakaway Communist Party violated Moscow's pledge against force, noting that the action did not threaten lives.

But he added: "Certainly it is a kind of force. We would be opposed to any kind of use of force ... it falls under the general framework of the pattern of intimidation that we have objected to in the past."

"It is incumbent that both sides maintain open communication and not take any actions that can be misinterpreted," Fitzwater said.

The spokesman said Soviet pressure on Lithuania has "seemed to escalate on a daily basis."

Soviet military chiefs refused to withdraw paratroopers from key Lithuanian centres as rebel leaders reported inconclusive talks on the Baltic state's independence bid.

"After coming out of this meeting, I can say the mood has changed," said Deputy Premier Romualdas Ozolas.

\$23m stolen in bank raid

GENEVA, March 26, (Reuters): Four armed men escaped with \$23 million Swiss francs (\$23 million) on Sunday in Switzerland's biggest bank robbery, police said.

The robbers burst into the Union Bank of Switzerland's branch in central Geneva and tied up two guards, a porter and a maintenance worker.

They seized keys from the guards and rifled through 10 safes holding notes weighing 200 kg (440 lbs) in the foreign currency department.

'Special US ties always': Thatcher

LONDON, March 26, (UPI): Britain's "special relationship" with the United States is stronger than ever, according to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who said in an interview published yesterday that she talks even more frequently with President George Bush than she did with Ronald Reagan.

In an interview with the Sunday Telegraph, Thatcher dismissed suggestions that her relationship with the American president is weaker than it was when Ronald Reagan was in the White House.

The suggestions arose after Bush took office last year. They have surfaced periodically since then, particularly as observers have perceived differences of opinion over matters such as the European Economic Community.

"The special relationship is very important, and it will always be there," Thatcher said. "We have the same language, the same heritage. Straightway, we can sit down and do business in a spirit of fundamental friendship."

Calling the US-British relationship "just there, like the air you breathe," Thatcher said she and Bush kept in close touch through a series of visits and frequent telephone calls.

"I think I talk to George on the telephone even more than I talked to Ronald Reagan," Thatcher said.

The prime minister made her remarks during a wide-ranging interview held after a politically harrowing week for her and the ruling Conservative Party. The Conservatives suffered a resounding electoral defeat in a mid-Staffordshire by-election and opinion polls showed further popularity declines nationwide.

An opinion poll published by the Sunday Times showed the Conservatives trailing 23 points behind the opposition Labour Party, now favoured by 54 per cent of Britons.

The Conservatives garnered support from only 31 per cent of those surveyed, while 76 per cent voiced dissatisfaction with Thatcher.



Big Ben stops

Big Ben's hourly bell, one of Britain's best known sounds, resounded over central London at 8 am (0700 GMT) today for the last time for up to 12 weeks.

The famous clock over the houses of parliament will continue to tell the time, but its hourly tolling has been silenced for essential repairs.

The hammer arm which strikes the bell to sound the number of bongers every hour is suffering from metal fatigue and will be replaced by a replica, government minister Christopher Chope said last week. Picture shows a Londoner walking past Westminster Tower which houses Big Ben. (Reuter wirephoto)



Election officials empty ballot boxes after polling of the first Hungarian free elections. (Reuter wirephoto)

Hungary vote counting

Incompetence shows

BUDAPEST, March 26, (AP): Hungary's first democratic voting nationwide in 43 years followed Western rules of fair play, but the vote counting reflected the East bloc tradition of maddening incompetence.

Hungarians like to think they're closer to modern Western Europe than to their allies in Eastern Europe, a region they derisively call "the Balkans" or "Asia."

But yesterday's election and its aftermath showed that the nation has some ways to go in reaching its aspirations for Western-style efficiency.

While international observers said they were satisfied that the voting was fair, the reporting of results was slow and filled with bores.

East Germany, which staged its first democratic national elec-

tions March 18, met the expectations of Western reporters by providing projections on the outcome shortly after the polls closed. Provisional final results were available five hours after the last vote was cast, and the official vote count was tallied by the next morning.

But the East Germans had help from West German computers and technical expertise. The Hungarians had modern computers to count the vote, but appeared incapable of using them.

Gleaming banks of computer terminals were on prominent display both at election committee headquarters at parliament and in the election studio of the state television.

The television began a live broadcast shortly after the polls closed for a scheduled 24-hour

programme, complete with an inspiring musical theme and jazzy graphics.

But the computer screens remained blank, devoid of any results on who won the touted elections.

Either because of technical glitches or a simple distrust of modern technology, election officials decided at the last minute to hand count the ballots cast by more than 5 million people. They used the computers only to cross-check final results.

That decision, in turn, emasculated the television's computer system, which had been partially depending on feeds from the election committee's network.

Red-faced commentators mumbled excuses, rapidly reaching hand-scrawled partial results from races involving obscure candidates.

Minister quits as Serbs take over police

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, March 26, (Reuters): The Interior Minister of Yugoslavia's Kosovo province has resigned after Serbia stripped him of control of regional security following ethnic clashes over a mass poisoning scare.

Kosovo officials said today that Jusuf Karakusi, an ethnic Albanian, quit yesterday as 2,500 extra Serbian police were drafted into the region.

His resignation coincided with growing concern among the majority ethnic Albanians that the Republic of Serbia, of which Kosovo is a part, is clamping more curbs on the southern province's autonomy.

Local people fear more clashes on Wednesday, the first anniversary of restrictions in Kosovo's autonomy in favour of Serbia that sparked riots which killed 28 people last year.

About 300 ethnic Albanians staged a protest outside a sports hall today in Pristina, Kosovo's capital, but they dispersed quietly when police arrived.

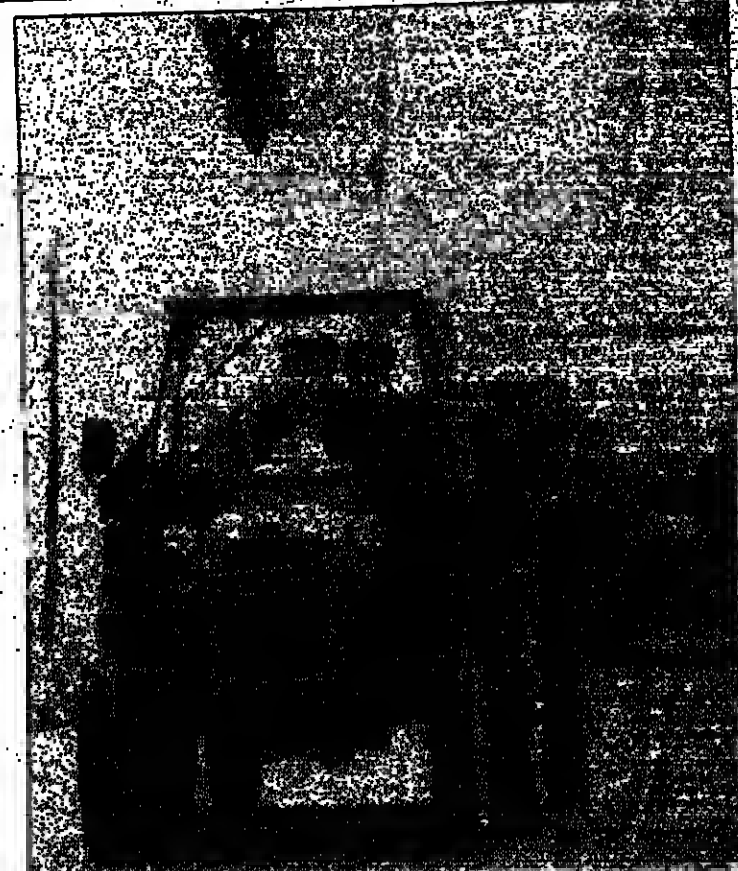
Hundreds of police armed with automatic rifles patrolled the town of Podujevo, scene of the worst violence in clashes last week. The atmosphere was tense as people lined the streets.

Radio Pristina said tanks rumbled through the town early on this morning. "We expect trouble today or tomorrow," a policeman said.

"We have formed special militia units in all communes. It can be considered completely controlled by the forces of public order and peace," Serbian Interior Minister Radmilo Bogdanovic said in an interview in the Politika newspaper.

He said investigations were under way to identify the organisers of the "faked poisoning" and those who went on the rampage last week, beating up Serbs and Montenegrins. Several had already been arrested.

The latest disturbances erupted after hundreds of ethnic Albanians were rushed to hospital on Thursday complaining of stomach pains and nausea. Their relatives hummed out Serbs and Montenegrins shouting "you poisoned our children."



Tractor bearing Albanian flag leads wedding procession in Yugoslav Kosovo province on a day of calm after at least 100 people were injured in ethnic clashes following a mysterious poisoning scare. (Reuter wirephoto)

Mongolia's dissident speaks out at last

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia, March 26, (AP): Dr Boshigt this month became Mongolia's first Communist Party member to hand in his membership card, ending a lifetime of waiting to speak out against political repression.

"I had to wait for favourable conditions," the 49-year-old physician said in an interview.

Boshigt joined the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party even though it had purged his physician father. He worked for the semi-official Peace and Friendship Association, acting as Mongolia's liaison to socialist international groups such as the African-Asian Solidarity committee.

For the scholarly, soft-spoken Boshigt, as for many Mongolians, the time to speak came last fall.

"With all this democratic change in East European countries and the perestroika policy this was the time to do something," he said, referring to the

reform policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Boshigt, who uses just one name, said he met like-minded supporters of reform in his long-time Soviet client state between China and the Soviet Union. He and the young intellectuals organised their first rally days later, on International Human Rights Day, Dec 10.

Thus was born the Mongolian Democratic Association, the nation's first opposition group in nearly seven decades.

"Always (before) there were people who wanted to do something," the physician said. "It was impossible."

His father, Gongorjav, was jailed for several years, then banished to the countryside when he objected to replacing Mongolia's ancient script with the Cyrillic letters used in the Soviet Union.

But voices of protest remained few and unorganised. Mongolia never developed a dissident community with its own literature and mutual support network.

Brothers of Saint John of God face tough task of renewing order in Prague

BRNO, Czechoslovakia, March 26, (Reuters): After more than 40 years of communist persecution in Czechoslovakia the Roman Catholic hospital order of the Brothers of Saint John of God faces an almost unsurmountable task of renewal.

"It is going to be extremely difficult to get the order off the ground again — though that does not mean we're not going to try very hard to do so," Brian O'Donnell, the order's Rome-based prior general said after a three-day visit to Brno this month.

Until 1948 there were some 50 religious orders — both male and female — in Czechoslovakia. After the communist

takeover that year the orders were disbanded, their property seized. Most of their members were imprisoned, sent to labour camps or forced into menial jobs.

O'Donnell was welcomed by a small group of men in worn brown habits, their voices shaking with age and emotion, who stood at the entrance of their last retreat singing the hymn of the Brothers of Saint John of God. The youngest was over 70 years old, the oldest almost 90.

Most had been banned from working in hospitals and worked as labourers, but those in Brno had been allowed to live in their original retreat in the monastery,

although health authorities took over the rest of the property.

Their faces and hands were marked by years of toil and hardship but they had preserved their faith and loyalty to their order. All were enthusiastically planning for the future.

"First of all we want to take over the monastery and church in Brno and make it into an old peoples' home," said Brother Ladislav, the provincial vicar, who had been secretly appointed eight years ago.

According to laws passed by Prague's new non-communist government, religious orders will have up to five years to reclaim confiscated property.

The monastery and hospital in Valdice near the Austrian border was founded in the early 17th century. From there the order founded institutions in Austria, Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia and Hungary — all then part of the Austrian empire.

Established in the mid-16th century in Spain, the Brothers of Saint John of God, a lay order, were officially recognised by the Vatican in 1572 and now have hospitals and health care institutions in 44 countries throughout the world.

While sharing Ladislav's enthusiasm O'Donnell saw a thorny path ahead.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Under the flag

Two soldiers have a rest on their tank while they sit under a Romanian flag in the centre of Tirgu Mures. (Reuter wirephoto)

Trotsky mystery resolved: Firebrand Red Army Commander Leon Trotsky rejected a chance to sideline Stalin and rule revolutionary Russia because he feared his Jewish roots could stoke anti-Soviet feeling abroad, according to a Soviet historian.

Britain's Observer Sunday newspaper said a document found by historian Victor Danilov that showed ailing revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin invited Trotsky to become deputy chairman of the government five years after the Bolsheviks took power in 1917.

But the document said Trotsky later told a meeting of the Communist Party's central committee: "We should not give our enemies the opportunity to say that our country was being ruled by a Jew." (Reuter)

Trabant waiting list shrinks: East Germans used to wait up to 15 years to get behind the wheel of the

sputtering car they call the "Trabi," but now they can have one in 24 hours.

A reporter for the youth newspaper Junge Welt — testing claims that a Trabant could now be had as easily as a Volkswagen in a West German showroom — said he successfully ordered one by telephone for collection the next day.

"It was a call that would have been absolutely unthinkable just a few months ago," he wrote on Friday of his call to state-run IFA Trabant factory in the industrial city of Zwickau. (Reuter)

Stalin statue Florida bound: A 12-foot (3.6 m) statue of Josef Stalin that stands abandoned in a state mason's yard at a north Moravian cemetery is about to be sold to raise money for medical supplies and shipped to the United States.

Jan Bohuslav, a Czechoslovak emigre in Miami Beach, is about to pay \$30,000 for the 5-tonne carved granite statue of Stalin in the central Czechoslovakia town of Zateb.

Now a tennis pro at the exclusive racquet club, Bohuslav left his home town of Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1966 for what he calls "political reasons." (UPI)

UK aviation overspill: British air traffic controllers have warned that UK civilian airlines are being allowed this week to fly through the middle of a Nato military exercise, it was reported in London Monday.

According to the UK air traffic controllers' union, up to 20 civilian airlines a day using a new "overspill" air track will be flying into uncontrolled air space in north east England, where "Operation Mallet Blow" is taking place. Around 180 military planes will take part in the exercise, lasting a week, which is designed to test the Nato air force's ability to penetrate Warsaw Pact defences, the UK media said. (Kuna)

3 held for role in jail break: Police Monday announced the arrest of three men suspected of flying a helicopter over a prison and trying to free a colleague who fell to his death.

The suspects were arrested Saturday and Sunday in and around Paris after being identified by the helicopter pilot and another witness, police said.

The pilot had not been told in advance of the nature of the flight on February 18, when a line was dropped from the helicopter and grabbed by Emile Dieudonne, 37, convicted for leading a series of holdups.

The escape attempt went awry when a second inmate at the prison in Fresnes, south of Paris, seized Dieudonne's legs in hopes of getting an unplanned ride to freedom. (AP)

Quake jolts Tadzhikistan: A powerful earthquake jolted Soviet Tadzhikistan and cracked buildings in several settlements, the official Soviet News Agency Tass said Monday. There were no reports of casualties.

The earthquake occurred at 6:18 pm (1418 GMT) Sunday. Its epicentre was located 380 kilometres (235 miles) southeast of the republic's capital of Dushanbe, Tass said. The earthquake registered eight on the 12-point Soviet scale at the epicentre, Tass said. Under the Soviet scale, an eight-point earthquake is termed "destructive" and may cause serious damage to buildings. (AP)



Quakes rock Costa Rica

Two strong earthquakes rocked Costa Rica on Sunday morning, sending people fleeing into the streets as walls cracked and windows shattered in the capital and other cities.

A worker cleans up a store after two earthquakes hit this Central American country. (Reuters wirephoto)

Post-Watergate days

Depression almost cost my life, says Nixon

NEW YORK, March 26, (Reuters). Former president Richard Nixon has disclosed in a new book that a black depression almost cost him his life after the Watergate scandal toppled him from power in 1974 and he had to struggle to recover physically, spiritually and mentally.

In the book, "In the arena," excerpted in this week's Time magazine and scheduled to be published next month, he also takes responsibility for the low moral tone of his administration that made the Watergate cover-up possible.

He concedes that the break-in and cover-up damaged the US political process, but adds that his morality followed that of his predecessors and adversaries.

Nixon was forced to resign in August 1974 after an investigation of a 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington.

Watergate complex implicated members of his administration in criminal activity.

He was admitted to hospital after then president Gerald Ford pardoned him in September and underwent surgery but says he went into shock and could not will himself to recover.

"I was a physical wreck; I was emotionally drained; I was mentally burned out. This time, as compared with the other crises I had endured, I could see no

reason to live, no cause to fight for. Unless a person has a reason to live for other than himself, he will die — first mentally, then emotionally, then physically," Nixon said.

"There was no precedent for what faced me in the 1970s. No one had ever been so high and fallen so low. No one before had ever resigned the presidency."

Only the support of his family and the thoughts and prayers of people, some of whom he has never met, enabled him to pull through, he said.

What happened in Watergate was wrong, he says.

"In retrospect... I should have established a moral tone that would have made such actions unthinkable. I did not. I played by the rules of politics as I found them. Not taking a higher road than my predecessors and my adversaries was my central mistake."

He paid a heavy financial as well as psychological price for his mistakes, he said. "In the 16 years since I resigned the presidency, I have spent more than \$1.8 million in attorneys' fees to defend myself against (lawsuits) and to protect my rights that were threatened by government action."

But Nixon is upbeat about his life, saying: "Only when you have been at the depths can you truly appreciate the heights."

Minister quits in row over drug war

BOGOTA, March 26, (Agencies). Colombian Interior Minister Carlos Lemos Simmonds resigned yesterday in a bitter quarrel over government drug policies and said his departure was a victory for the country's powerful cocaine traffickers.

Lemos, considered Colombia's toughest anti-drug minister, also said President Virgilio Barco had not defended him against allegations that he helped cause Thursday's murder of leftist presidential candidate Bernardo Jaramillo.

Barco named former attorney-general Serpa Uribe to replace Lemos, saying Uribe had a "clear and determined position against drug trafficking and terrorism."

The President thanked Lemos for being "an example of firmness and bravery".

In a two-page letter to Barco, Lemos said he could not continue in office without the support of the President and his government.

"Neither you, nor the government raised your voice to reject these imputations (of his involvement in the assassination), repudiate them and defend a man of good will," he said.

"In certain areas inside the government itself, the attitude in the face of drug trafficking has been changing almost imperceptibly and now it is not the same intransigent and firm policy that it was in December."

"I fear that with my departure from the ministry the drug traffickers and those who help them have obtained a victory," Lemos said.

Colombia has been locked since August in a war with cocaine traffickers in which some 200 people have died.

Jaramillo, candidate of the Leftist Patriotic Union (UP), was gunned down by a 16-year-old assassin at Bogota's main airport.

Shortly before Jaramillo's murder, Lemos accused the UP of having close links with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, one of the country's three main guerrilla groups.

The UP and other opposition parties charged that Lemos's comments had set up the lawyer for assassination.

Barco said on Sunday he was obliged to publicly defend the integrity of the UP which "has demonstrated its rejection of violence from wherever it comes."

Some 1,100 UP members have been murdered since 1985.

Meanwhile, the ruling Liberal Party held its convention in Bogota and formally nominated Cesar Gaviria, 43, for president.

Gaviria, who won a March 11 primary with 51 per cent of the vote, will face Rodrigo Lloreda, the candidate for the opposition Conservative Party, in general elections scheduled for May 27.

The convention delegates observed a minute of silence for Jaramillo and Luis Carlos Galan, a Liberal Party candidate assassinated in August by drug traffickers.

His death prompted Barco's anti-narcotics offensive.

Gaviria served as Galan's campaign manager.

Jaramillo, 36, was fatally wounded at Bogota's airport on Thursday.

He was buried yesterday in Manizales after thousands of Patriotic Union supporters marched through the city's streets.

His death prompted the Conservatives and the Patriotic Union to call for a postponement of the elections while the government takes additional measures to protect candidates.

But Gaviria, heavily favoured to win, said they should be held on schedule. "The only antidote for violence is more democracy," he said in his acceptance speech.

The candidate repeated his pledge to fight traffickers. He said an effective battle requires reforming the judicial system so it can bring cocaine traffickers to justice.

In the past, traffickers have been able to evade justice by bribing, threatening and killing judges.

The un-Happy Land

Only DJ survives inferno: 'It was a fire trap'

NEW YORK, March 26, (Agencies). In the club called Happy Land, the crowd danced and drank late into the night, enjoying the calypso, reggae and salsa sounds played by an amiable disc jockey, unaware they were spending the last moments of their lives.

About 3.30 am on Sunday (0830 GMT) the fire broke — sending flames through the first floor of the unlicensed, two-storey social club, pumping acrid smoke up the only stairway, overcoming the dancers and killing at least 87 people as they fought to flee.

Only the disc jockey survived.

The DJ's business partner, Peter Amaya, 30, said Happy Land was a "comfortable place where adults could go and have a drink and dance a little. I should have been there

the dead taken by the police.

They hoped they would not see their loved ones in the pictures, which were taped to a table so the relatives could look, filing by slowly, sometimes weeping.

Many of the relatives had gone to Happy Land often. It was an inexpensive place popular with Honduran immigrants from the neighbourhood. It cost just \$5 to get in and drinks were \$2.50, a far cry from \$20 cover charge and \$6 drinks in even a moderately priced Manhattan discotheque.

It was the kind of club that dots the poor neighbourhoods of the city, neighbourhoods where gutted buildings sit next to school houses and empty lots sprout broken glass instead of grass.

One of the reasons Happy Land was inexpensive was one of the reasons it was so deadly — it had no fire exits, no windows, there was only one way out.

The bar, the dance floor, most of the fixtures were made of wood, all encased in a concrete building.

Mayor David Dinkins and high officials were planning a task force to investigate the city's 700 social clubs to make sure the fire isn't repeated.

"It was a firetrap," said Anthony de Vita, the fire department's citywide command chief. "People literally were stacked on top of each other." Most of the dead were found on the second floor.

Most were believed to have suffocated from the thick smoke, but some also were trampled, said Lynn Schulman, an emergency medical service spokeswoman.

"This is the worst thing I have seen in my career," said emergency medical services specialist Christopher McCarthy. "It hurt my stomach. It was sickening."

"Most of the bodies were in dance clothes," McCarthy said. "They were out to have fun... I saw wall-to-wall bodies — an indication of mass confusion and panic."

EMS Lt. Roy David said there were "a lot of people, obviously frantic at one point, trying to make an exit."

The fire was the deadliest in the continental United States since May 28, 1977, when a blaze consumed the Beverly Hills Supper Club in Southgate, Kentucky, killing 164 people. A Dec 31, 1986 fire at a hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico, a US commonwealth, killed 96 people.

Denise Garcia, 20, a filing clerk who lives in the neighbour-

hood, said the club's patrons included many illegal immigrants. The assertion could not immediately be verified.

The building housed a group that organised children's baseball as well as adult social events, said Lillian Rivera, a neighbour.

After viewing the bodies, Dinkins called the scene "graphic and sad."

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the fire.

Two neighbourhood residents said three gunshots were heard just before the fire. Robert Unger, deputy fire commissioner, said he could not confirm another report that cans of accelerant were found.

A police spokesman, Lt Raymond O'Donnell said the club was shut down in December by the city buildings department. It had no liquor or cabaret licence, he said.

Police opened fire to disperse supporters of the African National Congress-linked United Democratic Front while attempting to march on regional offices of the ruling national party in the nearby city of Vereeniging.

The provincial administration reported two people dead on arrival at Sebokeng hospital, three others critically wounded and more than 300 treated for injuries. Thirty victims were admitted to the hospital.

Police said suspected African National Congress guerrillas fired two rocket propelled grenades last night at town council

offices in the black township of Soweto outside Johannesburg. The two Soviet-made RPG-7 grenades caused some damage, but police said there were no injuries.

An hour later, three Limpet mines were detonated at the Langlaagte power station in Johannesburg, badly damaging three transformers, police said. The blasts did not cause any injuries, they said.

Hundreds of police and security officers were bunting today for the men responsible for the attacks, the most serious in several months. Police were checking areas of Soweto and questioning possible suspects, officers said.

Police officials, who declined to be named, said they believed the ANC's military wing mounted the attacks as "a show of force" to back its demands that the South African defence forces agree to a ceasefire.

Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders are to meet with the government April 11 in Cape Town to try and clear the way for talks on ending white-minority rule and sharing political power with blacks.

President F.W. de Klerk legalised the ANC and other black opposition groups last month to try and clear the way for talks on drafting a new constitution.

The state-run South African Broadcasting Corporation said eight people were killed and nine injured in a faction fight yesterday near Tugela ferry.

Police reports said at least seven people were killed yesterday in fighting between rival black factions in the eastern province of Natal.

Asked if the problem was one of securing immunity for all members of the delegation, the source said: "Yes, it has been a problem but that is something that will be settled within the next few days."

Zuma was the first ANC leader to travel to South Africa legally from exile for nearly 30 years, following President F.W. de Klerk's lifting of the ban on the organisation last month.

Sunday's delegation was to have included Chris Hani, chief of staff of the ANC's armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (spears of the nation) and its political Commissar Steve Tshwete.

Sidelights

American dream shattered: Two and one-half years ago, Alva Romero left Honduras full of hope that life would be better in the United States.

Her dreams came crashing down on Sunday when six members of her family were killed in a fire at an illegal social club that claimed a total of 87 lives.

"We came here to better ourselves but this is what we get," a grief-stricken Romero said moments after confirming that her two brothers, a sister, daughter, a cousin and a niece had perished in the early morning fire at the Happy Land Club.

It wasn't political upheaval or severe dissatisfaction with Honduras that brought her here, she said. It was, quite simply opportunity.

"This is America. We all would have a chance to do better here," she said as she dabbed her eyes. "Now, I don't know."

Here, the 34-year-old woman worked in people's homes, helping the elderly and sick to feed and clothe themselves.

But on Sunday, it was friends and relatives who helped Romero at a nearby school, where the bereaved were taken. The brothers were 33 and 21 years old; the sister, daughter and cousin all were 18; the niece, 17. Her husband had remained in Honduras.

They had been to the club before and they liked it," Romero said. "It had been three weeks since they had been there."

"And, last night," she said, her voice choking with emotion, "last night, they all decided to go back to the club. I don't know why."

Nelson Moll, a Red Cross volunteer, said Romero was one of the first to show up at the school, where photographs of the dead were displayed.

When she saw the pictures of her family, Romero slumped forward, devastated by the news.

"She looked at the pictures and she just broke down pretty bad," he said. Six hours later, after viewing the photographs and the bodies at the morgue, a still-shocked Romero passively, almost distantly, answered reporters' questions.

Will she stay in the United States? "I don't know. Everything is changed. I don't know." (AP)

Stark symbol of tragedy: The Honduran flag draped over a fence at public school 67 stood as a stark symbol of tragedy in a poor immigrant neighbourhood.

Many of the 87 revelers killed in a fire at the Happy Land Club across the street were immigrants from Honduras and the Dominican Republic. Many shared a common vision.

"They tried to live the American dream: to get a job and make something of themselves," said Cheo Garcia, who patronised the unlicensed club.

"They all dreamed of returning home — but with more money," said Miguel Reyes, coach of the C.D. Adraza amateur soccer team.

Reyes counted three team members among the dead, all natives of Puerto Cortez, Honduras.



A man comforts a woman outside the Happy Land nightclub in the Bronx, New York. (Reuters wirephoto)



Firemen outside the Happy Land nightclub in the Bronx, New York. (Reuters wirephoto)

US steps up supplies to Angolan Unita rebels

KINSHASA, March 26, (AP). The United States has stepped up support for anti-Marxist Angolan rebels, shipping thousands of gallons (litres) of fuel and specially equipped four-wheel-drive vehicles through this airport, a US diplomatic source said during the weekend.

"Three Toyota Landcruisers are being stripped daily here and outfitted with heavy machine guns. They (the rebels) are going to use them for hit-and-run attacks," said the source, who declined to be named.

The vehicles are considered ideal for travelling on the sand and scrub-covered roads in southeastern Angola, site of most of the fighting in the 15-year-old civil war.

The source said at least 120,000 gallons of diesel fuel were being shipped to Jonas Savimbi's Unita (National

Union for the Total Independence of Angola) rebels.

Savimbi asked for gasoline-powered vehicles but transport of gasoline was considered too dangerous, the source added.

The rebels in recent months have been facing one of the biggest offensives of the war from the Soviet- and Cuban-backed Angolan government.

The United States has pledged to support Savimbi until Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos agrees to "national reconciliation" — short-hand for accepting negotiations that will lead to power-sharing with Unita.

During last week's tour of southern Africa by US Secretary of State James Baker, a senior official travelling with the secretary reaffirmed his government would not permit the Angolan government to crush Savimbi's rebels.

troys most vestiges of a fledgling government and administration throughout the Central African nation and left citizens of the former French colony with little education and broken dreams.

Augustine Vanamby ran away to N'Djamena at the age of 16 from a village outside the southern town of Sarb where she had been married off for the brideprice of five cows at the time when marauding bands of renegade soldiers were terrorising peasants in the region.

Now 22, to support her daughter and several members of her own family, she

serves meals and beer in her two-room mud-brick house in Bololo neighbourhood and works as a prostitute at feeling and equinox, two nightclubs catering to French soldiers.

About 1,000 soldiers, members of a French presence that has been maintained off and on since independence in 1960, are part of operation Sparrowhawk, meant to be a buffer against Libyan attacks south of the 16th parallel.

In a scrapbook bearing the name of the French contingent in gold letters, Augustine has saved photos from a trip to France where she tried to become a computer



A small boy chants anti-apartheid slogans and waves an African National Congress flag at an anti-apartheid rally in Trafalgar Square. (Reuters wirephoto)

Chadian civil war leaves citizens with little education and broken dreams

N'DJAMENA, March 26, (AP). When wild-haired Chadian warriors from the northern desert descended on this sleepy capital a decade ago, they ran bayonets through books and strung rolls of film from the Normandy cinema through the trees on avenue Charles de Gaulle.

Their enemies from the south or the east or the west fired mortars into the country's only mainframe computer and ransacked schools and government offices.

The complex civil strife that consumed nearly 20 of Chad's 30 years of independence from 1968 to 1987 laid waste to more than just homes and buildings. It des-

troys most vestiges of a fledgling government and administration throughout the Central African nation and left citizens of the former French colony with little education and broken dreams.

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programmer.

"My money ran out, and I had to make more to support my daughter and mother and brothers and sisters," she explained, lingering over a picture of herself in front of a Chateau.

At the Faya-Largeau Oasis halfway between N'Djamena and the Libyan border, France is building a 9,240-foot (2,800-meter) airfield and airport capable of receiving passenger aircraft straight from Europe — and putting military aircraft within striking range of often hostile Libya.

INTERNATIONAL

Law loopholes allow Aids vaccine testing

LOS ANGELES, March 26. (Reuters) A little-known California law is allowing drug companies to test Aids vaccines without going through cumbersome US Food and Drug Administration procedures which critics say could hold up potentially life-saving measures for years.

Two drugs intended to combat the disease are already being tested on humans under California's "mini-FDA" law and a third, a vaccine aimed at creating immunity to the deadly disease, will shortly start similar trials.

It is also proposed that a controversial French abortion pill be tested under the state law which, in effect, bypasses the red tape surrounding federal protocols for drug testing and evaluation.

Professor Allan Goldstein, the developer of the HGP-30 vaccine, which will start trials in California some time in May, said his company "gave up on the FDA process out of frustration."

He stressed that California's requirements for testing were no less stringent than those of the FDA, but there was "less red tape" attached.

A spokeswoman for Dr. Jonas Salk, the 75-year-old polio vaccine pioneer, whose anti-Aids drug is currently being tested as a possible treatment for people already infected with the HIV virus, said Salk went to the California authorities before

approaching the FDA in Washington.

"We decided it was much more expeditious to go straight to the California authorities and start testing here," said Joan Abramson.

A third possible Aids treatment has started testing in California, but it is reported to have become stalled up in a patent dispute.

The California law, originally passed in 1939, allows drug companies to test products in the state without going through Washington, providing no interstate commerce is involved.

In other words the drug must be totally manufactured and tested in California.

The law was expanded two years ago to allow the testing of Aids drugs.

Goldstein, professor and chairman of the department of biochemistry and molecular biology at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, said even the marine mollusks known as limpets, which are used in the production of his synthetic vaccine, were being taken from the California coastline.

Goldstein called the California law "a credit to the state," and said his frustration with authorities in Washington stemmed from the fact that "this is such a terrible disease we want to move as quickly as possible (to find a cure or prevention)".

HGP-30 is already being tested in England with promising results, Goldstein said.

He said the vaccine, which is intended to build up immunity to the HIV virus, the precursor of Aids, would be tested on 24 healthy volunteers.

Salk's drug, in contrast, is aimed at those already infected with the HIV virus. It is intended to prevent further deterioration of the immune system with periodic injections.

About 100 Californians have been tested with the drug and the FDA in Washington recently sanctioned the expansion of testing to a further 60 people outside the state.

Salk has also been given permission by California to test 10 people in the state who are not infected.

Salk, whose Salk Institute is based in San Diego, California, hopes that anti-bodies created by the drug in healthy volunteers can be extracted and used in HIV patients.

● The proportion of drug addicts carrying the Aids virus is likely to be much lower than feared, according to a pilot study that cited the free distribution of syringes as a major factor in preventing the spread of the deadly disease.

The Zurich Aids Intervention project said its survey published Thursday suggested 15-20 per

cent of all hard drug users were infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that leads to Aids.

Earlier estimates put the level of infection as high as 60-80 per cent.

The survey was carried out in a Zurich park that has become the country's most notorious gathering point for drug users.

Since the anti-Aids project was launched in Platzpark one year ago, doctors and social workers have handed out 1.4 million syringes, 500,000 replacement needles and 50,000 condoms, one of the project's leaders said.

Prof Peter Grob told a press conference that the exchange of up to 6,400 syringes a day had helped combat the "daily spread of Aids."

● Aids patients taking an experimental drug under their own doctors' supervision have been dying at more than 10 times the rate of those taking the drug in clinical tests, the New York Times reported.

Out of 8,000 patients taking the new drug in an expanded distribution programme, 290 have died, the newspaper said.

But in clinical trials by the drug's manufacturer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, only two of the 700 patients taking DDI, or didoxyninone, have died, the company said.

The US Food and Drug Administration set up the expanded access programme last August after people with Aids and their supporters demanded the drug be made available through private doctors even before it was fully tested.

● Women who arrange for abortions at many New York City clinics often find they are infected with the Aids virus, an informal survey suggests.

Callers from the city's human rights commission made appointments with 30 abortion clinics and physicians that advertised in the yellow pages.

Twenty cancelled the appointment after the caller said she was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV, but had no symptoms of Aids.

Katherine Franke, a commission lawyer who led the informal study, said 12 clinics said they did not have adequate infection control while others said abortion on an HIV-infected woman was too complicated a procedure for them to handle and referred the caller to a hospital.

● State funds for Aids research in Switzerland, which has the highest case rate per capita in Europe, are to be more than doubled in the next two years, the government has proposed.

The federal executive called on parliament to

approve an increase in credits from 6 to 16 million Swiss francs (\$10.7 million) for 1990-91, to be spent on about 100 research projects.

The proposal follows a recommendation by a special government commission which warned that most of the projects would have to be abandoned unless there would be additional funds.

The projects include a pathological study to be conducted anonymously in five hospitals with 2,500 carriers of the HIV virus that causes Aids. Aids among the projects are clinical studies of HIV infected pregnant women.

● A secret government inquiry into the research of America's leading Aids scientist uncovered evidence that he was not the first to discover the deadly virus, as the United States has claimed, newspaper reported.

But an internal report issued by the National Cancer Institute after the inquiry failed to mention the evidence and concluded that the institute's Robert C. Gallo was the first to discover the Aids virus, the Chicago Tribune reported.

As a result of the omission, legal briefs filed by the government in the US Court of Claims and before the patent and trademark office contained repeated misstatements of fact about Gallo's research, the Tribune said.

Cancer breakthrough: British doctors have made a discovery that could help to beat lung cancer, it was reported in London Friday.

They have found a gene which leads to the growth of a tumour when it is damaged by tobacco smoke.

Dr David Lane was quoted by the British media as saying "it offers new and logical routes to treating lung cancer, and there was now the possibility of targeting the changed gene and knocking it out with a poison."

The findings were reported in the British medical journal The Lancet. (Kuna)

Diet-heart link: The link between diet and heart attacks in women is highlighted in an article in Friday's issue of the British medical journal The Lancet.

An extensive study of nearly 1,000 women in 30 hospitals in northern Italy was carried out by six doctors and scientists from a research institute in Milan.

The Lancet said that the women's team estimated the relative risk for heart attacks associated with various foods, and the risk was found to be greater in meat eaters.

Surprisingly fatty forms of meat carried a slightly smaller risk, but the risk posed by butter was much greater.

The risk ratio for coffee was said to be 2.8 to every person. (Kuna)

Influenza 'cocktail' shots: The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended a triple-strain "cocktail" vaccine Friday for immunisation in the 1990-1991 influenza season.

Issued each year, WHO advises doctors on the best kind of "fin vaccine" to use are based on data from 100 laboratories world-wide on prevalent viruses.

Influenza seasons usually run from November to May in the Northern Hemisphere and in the Southern Hemisphere from May or June until September. (UPI)

Recall of food supplement: Citing a mounting toll of illness and death, US health officials on Thursday expanded their recall of L-tryptophan to include even small amounts of the once-popular food supplement.

To date, the chemical—a synthetic version of a natural human protein—has been linked to 19 deaths and 1,411 cases of a rare blood disorder known as eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome, or EMS, the government said.

Officials said the move was necessary because reports continued to trickle in to public health authorities of illnesses and deaths linked to the product, despite an earlier recall and an order that all imports of the product be detained at US ports. (Reuters)

Baby's heart repaired: Australian surgeons have repaired a baby's malformed heart born outside the boy's body, then inserted it inside his rebuilt and enlarged chest cavity.

The seven-hour operation, believed to be unique, took place last Thursday immediately after Daniel Wengier's birth at a Melbourne Children's Hospital, a hospital spokesman said on Thursday.

"We can't claim Daniel is out of the woods yet. His condition is stable, he's progressing slowly but it's a long haul," the spokesman said. (Reuters)

Fish oil reduces BP: Fish oil, which already has a reputation for protecting people against heart disease, may also help reduce high blood pressure, Norwegian doctors report in the current issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

A team led by Kasper H. Bousha have six grammes of fish oil daily to each of 78 volunteers with high blood pressure. After 10 weeks of taking the capsules, their blood pressure dropped by an average of three points.

Another 78 volunteers who received corn oil capsules had no significant change in their blood pressure.

But there is apparently a limit to the blood pressure effects of fish oil. Patients who were already eating at least three fish meals a week as part of their regular diet were unaffected by the supplements. (Reuters)

Polio nearly eradicated: Polio is close to being eradicated in the Western Hemisphere, so close that the Pan American Health Organisation is offering 100 rewards to be sure it finds all the cases.

"At this point we think we're on the verge of seeing our last paralytic polio in the Western Hemisphere," said Dr Donald A. Henderson, president of the technical advisory group of the organisation's expanded programme on immunisation.

"We're having a lack of a time finding the wild virus at this time," he said. He spoke in an interview Wednesday during a meeting in Mexico City of the group. (AP)

Health improves for US whites: The health of white Americans is improving, but Aids, homicide and lack of access to medical care are cutting short the lives of black Americans, according to a government report released Thursday.

While the life expectancy of whites held steady from 1987 to 1988 at 75.6 years, the span for blacks dropped slightly to 69.5. For black men, it is 65.1 years, the report said.

"America's health is good overall, and we are making excellent progress in many areas," Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan said. "But this report also makes clear that we need to do better." (AP)

CDC curtails monkey imports: The US Centres for Disease Control on Thursday halted imports by three of the nation's largest monkey dealer concerns about a spreading virus.

Ebola virus, which was the deadliest known virus in the world before Aids, was spotted in the United States in November in three monkeys at the Hazleton Research Products Inc. factory in Reston, Virginia. In January, an Ebola-related virus turned up in a monkey in a Pennsylvania laboratory. (AP)

Schizophrenia study: Small physical differences inside the brain may help explain why some people are afflicted with the severe mental illness of schizophrenia, says a study published Thursday in Boston.

Several earlier studies have described what appear to be differences in the brains of schizophrenics. But because the abnormalities were so slight, experts were uncertain whether they truly were unique to people with the mental disorder.

The latest work tried to settle this question by comparing the brains of 15 sets of identical twins. In each pair, one twin had schizophrenia; the other did not. (AP)

Foetus death ruling: A judge and prosecutors came under attack Thursday over a verdict implying that a foetus killed in a drunk-driving accident did not count as a loss of life.

Keith Naylor, presiding over Liverpool Crown Court, sentenced 25-year-old Mark Wenham to a three-year driving ban and a one-pound (\$1.60) fine Wednesday after he pleaded guilty to charges of reckless driving and driving with excess alcohol.

Wenham's car hit Donna Gardner, 24, a pedestrian, who was eight months pregnant. Despite emergency surgery, the baby was stillborn.

Naylor ruled that it was not a case of causing death by reckless driving, stating, "Had it occurred some nine or 10 days later, there would have been an actual life to be lost."

David Alton, an anti-abortion campaigner and lawmaker for the opposition Liberal Democratic Party, asked for the case to be reviewed at a higher level. (AP)

Americans for organic produce: A sizeable number of Americans changed their eating habits last year due to concern about chemical residues in food and there was a 10-point increase in people who tried organic food, a poll said Sunday.

The nation-wide Louis Harris Poll, commissioned by Organic Gardening magazine, found that 84 per cent of the respondents would buy organic produce if it cost the same as conventionally grown fruits and vegetables.

Although 44 per cent said they would buy organic produce even if it cost more, the figure last year was 49 per cent. The poll did explain reason for the drop. (UPI)

Drug Genivir eases herpes: A Finnish skin specialist said he and other researchers had tested successfully a drug that gave considerable relief to sufferers from both strains of herpes.

Assistant Professor Allan Lassus said researchers outside Finland found the drug, Genivir, also relieved virulent skin rashes in patients with the killer disease, Aids.

He said he had tested the preparation in the form of a cream on 200 patients with genital herpes and 60 with common herpes and found it reduced the length of the attacks. (Reuters)

Balance restored: Clayton Forster had lost one job because of chronic dizziness and was about to lose another. Then an experimental operation restored his balance by destroying a malfunctioning organ.

"I'd have an attack maybe once every few months where I would be actually on the floor," said Forster, who suffers from Meniere's disease. "But I would be under attack maybe months at a time, very mildly."

"You had to be on your toes. Things were shifting."

Doctors don't know what causes the disease, which was first described a century ago by a French physician. It attacks the semicircular canals—a major part of the body's balance system—three tiny, sharply bent tubes in the ear filled with a thick fluid and lined with hair cells that sense any motion in that fluid. (AP)

New form of hepatitis found: Medical researchers said on Thursday they had identified a new strain of hepatitis linked to epidemics in the developing world, raising hopes that a way to diagnose and treat the viral infection will soon be developed.

"Now we have hepatitis E, which is a major problem in the developing nations, where it causes epidemics and is particularly dangerous for pregnant women," said researcher Gregory R. Reyes of the Private Genetics Inc. in Redwood City, California.

As many as 20 per cent of pregnant women who become infected with the newly identified virus die from the infection, Reyes said. (Reuters)

Lung transplants successful: Lung transplants can be successfully performed in patients who would otherwise die within 12 to 18 months, with more than 50 per cent surviving for more than one year with the new lung, a new Canadian study released on Wednesday found.

A group of doctors in Toronto performed 20 single-lung transplants between 1983 and 1989 in patients with extensive lung disease who were given no more than 18 months to live.

The study, the largest ever on the relatively new operation, examined nine patients who survived for more than six years before dying of kidney failure and was the longest-living survivor of a single lung transplant. (Reuters)

Heart stress under study: Long periods of moderate stress common in daily life can trigger potentially hazardous disruptions in the heart's blood supply, a new study shows.

The research is the latest effort to understand what happens during silent ischemia, painless moments when the heart needs more blood than its arteries can supply.

As many as 3 million to 4 million Americans have these episodes without knowing it. Heart specialists are debating just what to do about them, and even whether the spells are truly dangerous. (AP)

Clot busters: Speedier injections of clot-busting drugs to heart attack victims improves their chances of escaping permanent damage, suggesting that ambulance crews can save lives by administering this medicine on the way to the hospital, a study concludes.

Even when hospitals are prepared to offer this treatment, hours may pass before patients reach the emergency ward, are evaluated by heart specialists and eventually hooked up to lines that drip the medicine into their bloodstreams.

The new research supports the growing belief that for this approach to work well, it must be offered fast, perhaps even before heart attack victims leave their homes. (AP)

Half of deaths due to arrhythmia

Heart rhythm drugs can be dangerous

DALLAS, (UPI) Widely used drugs to treat irregular heart rhythms may actually make some patients with congestive heart failure worse and possibly increase their risk of sudden death, a study showed.

The report is the second in recent months pointing out the possible danger of using anti-arrhythmic agents to control abnormal heartbeats, which are a frequent contributor to sudden death.

Patients should not stop taking an anti-arrhythmic drug without consulting their physicians, researchers said, but they should ask doctors to reevaluate their therapy.

The latest study at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York found that three anti-arrhythmic drugs had an adverse effect on some patients with congestive heart failure.

The report in the March issue of Circulation, an American Heart Association publication, compared the effects of procainamide, which has been on the market for more than 20 years, and two new, supposedly safer classes of drugs, tocainide and encainide.

The study found congestive heart failure grew worse in six of the 21 patients when they were given encainide; in seven patients when given tocainide and two of the 21 when given procainamide.

The AHA estimates 2 million people in the United States experience heart failure because high blood pressure, infections or heart attacks has damaged the heart's pumping ability. The lack of pumping power leads to a build up of fluids in body tissues and in the legs, abdomen and lungs.

These patients have an extremely high death rate. Almost half of the deaths in such patients are sudden and presumably due to an arrhythmia, or irregular heart rhythm, said co-author Dr Stephen Gottlieb.

Until now, doctors have prescribed anti-arrhythmic drugs to patients with congestive heart failure, believing the drugs would help and probably do no



A patient, in readiness for heart surgery, is anaesthetised and paralysed with a muscle relaxant.

harm, he said.

Denver heart specialist Dr K.E. Hammermeister, in an editorial accompanying the new study, said the "inescapable" conclusion of such findings is that the drugs should be used only in patients whose irregular heartbeats cause serious or life-threatening symptoms.

Two new Salvo Wednesday in the confusing war of research over food fiber arrived at the same conclusion: "It's good for you."

Both studies looked at water-soluble fiber, the nutrient that has been credited by some with almost magical powers for its seeming ability to lower people's cholesterol levels.

Some dietary experts recommend that people add oat bran, psyllium or other foods that are high in this form of fiber. However, soluble fiber's aura was tarnished recently by another report suggesting that it only helps if it takes the place of fat in the diet.

In one of the new studies, doctors found that a twice-daily dose of the laxative metamucil, which is made from psyllium, appears to lower blood cholesterol levels by about 5 per cent, even when people are already on low-fat diets.



A new wheelchair has been designed for disabled bowlers which enables them to compete on equal terms with the able-bodied.

New drug to help 'boy in the bubble' disease

WASHINGTON, (AP) A new drug approved Friday by the US Food and Drug Administration will dramatically improve the lives of children born with a rare disease that makes them unable to fight infections, public health officials said.

About 40 children are born world-wide each year with severe combined immunodeficiency disease, or Scid, which is also called "boy in the bubble" disease because some children have survived only by living in an enclosed, sterile environment.

Without adequate immune systems, these children are unable to fight infectious diseases like chicken pox or pneumonia. Most die before they are two years old.

The only cure for this genetic disorder, which appears to be a lack of an enzyme, is bone marrow transplant, generally from a brother or sister.

The new product, called Peg-ada and made by Enzon Inc. of South Plainfield, New Jersey, will allow children for whom bone marrow transplant is not possible or has failed to survive outside a sterile environment.

Only about 20 per cent of the children born with Scid

find a compatible donor and only about 30 per cent to 40 per cent of those have successful transplants, said Donna Chappina, a spokeswoman for Enzon.

"It will have a dramatic effect on improving the quality of life for the patients and their families," said Dr. James Mason, assistant secretary for health in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Once the drug takes effect in their body, children who had been confined to sterile isolation would be able to live a normal life, going to school and interacting with other people, Chappina said.

Peg-ada was developed with a \$169,000 grant from the FDA under the "orphan" drug programme, which is designed to give companies a financial incentive to develop products for an extremely small patient population.

The drug is administered weekly by injection. It is designed to replace the missing enzyme adenosine deaminase, or Ada. But because it does not prompt the body to produce the enzyme, patients must take the injections for the rest of their lives.

The product will be marketed under the name Adagen.

Dentist's drill to become obsolete

ATLANTA, (AP) What if you don't want to open your mouth wide, have a needle plunged in your gums and feel a drill grinding the most tender of your teeth?

Just be patient and look forward to that as-yet-unscheduled dental appointment a decade from now. By the year 2000 dental experts believe the drill will be obsolete and the needle replaced with an electronic anesthetic machine.

The technology will be demonstrated to 17,000 dental professionals attending the 78th annual Thomas P. Himmelman dental meeting Friday through Monday in Atlanta.

Among research to be presented is the development of a fast-acting dental drill that will make the dental drill obsolete by the end of this decade.

"The 1990s are going to be incredible for dentistry," said Tom Truhe, director of the Princeton Dental Research Center in Princeton, New Jersey.

Fifty 40 per cent of American adults do not have regular dental checkups. Studies blame this failure on many people's belief that they do not need checkups as well as on the fear of needles and drills.

"We're working on reasons two and three," Truhe said, adding that a time lapse of eight to 10 years exists between the time new techniques are developed and the time they are used in dental offices.

The laser, which was developed in France and is already being used there and in the United States on soft dental tissue, vaporizes tooth decay without the noise, vibration or smell often associated with dental drills, he said.

Truhe said laser also decreases the chances of tooth decay returning after fillings.

But while lasers can penetrate dentin—the second level of tooth covering—they have not been able yet to pass through the hardest and outermost tooth layer, enamel.

Still, there is little doubt, Truhe said, that lasers will be the standard of care for repairing dental cavities by the year 2000.

Dentistry has also followed engineering into the field of Cadcam—computer aided design—computer aided manufacture.

Cadcam techniques, which were developed in Switzerland, are being used in European dental schools to fit a patient with crowns, bridges inlays and other restoration work in a single day.

Truhe said. The technology uses laser scanning instead of soft impressions to design the features that can then be quickly made and installed.

Also, electronic anesthesia machines have been developed in the United States to deaden pain through battery power. The FDA-approved machines already are in use in some dentists' offices and are still being researched at the University of Colorado.

The machines employ electrical impulses that travel through battery wires to small adhesive pads attached to the patient's mouth.

Truhe explained that the impulses deaden pain by flooding nerves with non-painful stimuli so that painful stimuli cannot pass through. The impulses also increase the brain's production of pain-killing chemicals as serotonin and endorphins.

The batteries—the size used in a flashlight—power the system and the patient has a hand-held controller to regulate the amount of painkiller needed, he said.

The system, being sold by the Ultracalm Science Co. in Colorado has been in use for a year and is proving itself suited for tooth fillings and deep cleanings, he said.

Mammograms can cut breast cancer deaths

NEW ORLEANS, (AP) An estimated 44,000 American women will die of breast cancer in 1990, a mortality rate that could be dramatically reduced if more doctors would refer patients for mammograms, cancer specialists say.

Mammography, an X-ray examination of the breasts, is a widely accepted and often recommended method of early detection for the disease, according to the American Cancer Society.

"The whole point of mammography is you can find the breast cancer two years before you can feel it," said Cori Vanchieri, director of the National Cancer Institute's early detection education programme.

Only 19 per cent of US women are regularly screened for breast cancer, said Dr. Sandra Swain of the Lombardi Cancer Centre at Georgetown University.

"Scientists say if women got mammograms as often as they should, we would see a 30 per cent reduction in the death rate," Ms Vanchieri said Thursday.

The cancer experts were in New Orleans for the American College of Radiology's 24th national conference on breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society recommends that women get their first mammogram between ages 35 and 39; then mammograms combined with a doctor's examination every one or two years between ages 40 and 49; and annual mammograms and exams over 50.

But doctors in practice aren't recommending mammograms for their patients with regularity, Ms Vanchieri said. In 1989, 37 per cent of doctors surveyed said they were referring women for screening based on the Cancer Society guidelines. That's up from 11 per cent

in 1984 but still inadequate, she said.

Early screening could improve cancer detection rates by 50 per cent, said Dr. Daniel Kopans, an associate professor of radiology at Harvard University and director of breast imaging at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

"Doctors to a certain extent are at fault for not recommending screening," he said.

Physicians give several reasons for not recommending X-ray screening, including cost, dispute over the beginning age and frequency for testing, and a lack of information, Kopans said.

"Believe it or not, a lot of physicians are just not aware of the value of mammography," Kopans said.

Gunmen kill 3 Afghan rebel leaders

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, March 26, (AP): Gunmen killed three Afghan rebel commanders and three bodyguards yesterday near the northwestern Pakistani town of Peshawar, rebel sources said.

The men belonged to the Harakat Inqilab-i-Islami guerrilla party of Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, one of six groups forming the Pakistan-based rebel government fighting the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

Among the dead were Mohammad Naseeb Akhundzada, Harakat commander for the southern province of Helmand, Maulvi Jamadar of the northern province of Jozjan, and Nazim Ahmad Akhundzada, commander for Band Katakai area of Helmand.

They were travelling by jeep from Peshawar to the Harakat camp at Cherat in the east when gunmen opened fire, killing them instantly.

An Afghan rebel commander, who was notorious for his opium poppy production in southern Afghanistan, was killed yesterday in an ambush outside the border city of Peshawar, Western diplomats said.

Nazim Akhundzada and six heavily armed bodyguards were gunned down outside a compound, 10 miles (16 km) east of Peshawar, said diplomatic sources, who spoke on condition that they not be identified.

Akhundzada's drug empire took in most of Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand, Afghan and diplomatic sources said.

Late last year Akhundzada reportedly asked the United States for \$2 million a month to stop growing opium poppies. US embassy officials in Islamabad dismissed the report.

"It just wasn't true," said a US diplomat who declined to be identified. "He was told that because he was growing poppies we couldn't deal with him at all."

"He was a strong, traditional mullah," said Hamid Karzai, a rebel spokesman. "He was one of Harakat's strongest and most powerful commanders."

Last year Akhundzada waged a bloody drug war in Helmand province against a rival commander, who belonged to Rasul Sayyaf's fundamentalist Ittihad-i-Islami or Islamic unity party.

The turf battle reportedly left scores dead and Sayyaf's commander eventually abandoned the rebels and joined the government.

Akhundzada's death came five days after one of Sayyaf's field commanders, Paisa Mohammadi, was killed outside Peshawar, said Qarib Saeed, a spokesman for Hekmatyar's party.

Nine Swedes missing in Red Sea

KHARTOUM, Sudan, March 26, (AP): Nine Swedish tourists disappeared while diving in the Red Sea off Sudan's coast last week, a government newspaper reported today.

Al-Kuwaiti Al-Musallah, which speaks for the armed forces, said the tourists vanished on Wednesday in the scenic Romeo area famous for its coral reefs.

The area lies north of Port Sudan, the country's main Red Sea outlet 420 miles (672 km) northeast of Khartoum. It is considered a tourist attraction, but sharks occasionally have been seen there.

The newspaper said Sudanese navy men still were searching for the Swedes. It gave no other details.

Suspense over Israeli leader's speech

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, March 26, (UPI): Excitement and controversy surrounded preparations for a speech by the ultra-orthodox spiritual leader who guides two political parties holding critical votes in the formation of Israel's next government.

Scalpers sold tickets for 10 times their price to the sold-out Degel Hatorah annual party convention where Rabbi Eliezer Schach was expected to pronounce whether the ultra-orthodox party would join Labour Party leader Shimon Peres in a coalition government or back Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Peres orchestrated the no-confidence motion that brought down the Shamir government March 15 and has been given the mandate to try to form Israel's next coalition. Given the current alignment of parties in the 120-member Israeli Parliament, Labour and Likud would have the same amount of votes if Degel Hatorah and Shas, another ultra-orthodox party Schach guides, back Shamir.

The National Journalists Association yesterday sharply criticised Degel Hatorah for forbidding women journalists to attend the convention. Ultra-orthodox Jewish doctrine forbids the assembly of

males and females together at public functions.

More than 10,000 tickets were sold for \$5 to the males-only convention held at a Tel Aviv basketball stadium. For women who want to hear the elderly rabbi's speech, simultaneous broadcasts were expected to be arranged in auditoriums in Jerusalem and the ultra-orthodox community of Bnei Brak near Tel Aviv.

The Degel Hatorah convention was scheduled before the present government crisis, but has since taken on great political implications as Israel's two major political parties vie for support of the ultra-orthodox parties.

Shas and Degel Hatorah have eight seats in Israel's Parliament, the Knesset. A third ultra-orthodox party, Agudat Israel, holds five seats and has indicated its support for Labour but has not signed a final coalition agreement.

Hardline Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose party was banned from Parliament for racism, announced plans today for a political comeback.

The former parliamentarian told a news conference ahead of his trial next week for inciting hatred that his Kach Party would fight the next election.

21-gun salute as PLO leader begins India visit

Arafat warns of Mideast war

BEIRUT, March 26, (UPI): Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said in remarks published today that the Middle East would witness another devastating war unless Palestinians were soon granted self-determination.

Arafat also called on India and Pakistan to resolve through peaceful negotiations their protracted dispute over Kashmir.

The PLO chief, who is recognised by India as the president of the independent nation of Palestine, was accorded the full honours of a visiting head of state.

Arafat drove up in a motorcade to the British-built presidential palace and his vehicle was escorted by horse-mounted lancers in turbans and red uniforms from the front gates into the sprawling forecourt of the massive dome-topped building.

A 21-gun salute boomed out as he was greeted by Prime Minister V.P. Singh, President Ramaswamy Venkataraman and other senior officials. He then inspected a military honour guard.

Arafat later held talks with Singh on the situation in the Middle East and on South Asian issues. During his three-day visit, he was also to receive the 1988 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for international understanding.

Asked about the influx of Soviet Jews to Israel and fears that many of them would be settled in the West Bank, Arafat said: "We will continue to deal with our friends in Moscow for the sake of our people and at the same time with respect for the human rights."

"Tomorrow he is scheduled to fly to Calcutta to visit Mother Teresa, winner of the 1979 Nobel peace prize. In 1982, at the height of the Israeli war against the PLO, the Yugoslav-born nun went to West Beirut to rescue mentally retarded children who were trapped in a hospital on the edge of a Palestinian refugee camp near the Israeli front line."

US Secretary of State James Baker has been pushing for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, but the issue has led to the fall of Israel's ruling coalition, and continuing uncertainty about whether the US-sponsored plan will get off the ground.

Arafat warned that Israel was using the influx of Soviet Jews to press ahead with plans for a "greater Israel."

The warning came after earlier remarks from Israel's Likud Party leader Yitzhak Shamir who was quoted as saying a "greater Israel" was needed to cope with the expected influx of Jewish migrants.

"The Israeli enemy will now go on implementing his plan for a greater Israel ... following the migration of Jews from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Ethiopia," Arafat was quoted as saying.

Arafat claimed that a "greater Israel" would include "Palestine, Jordan and large parts of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia," and that the first step in implementation of such a plan would be the annexation of Jordan.

The PLO leader said Israel was looking to destabilise Jordan and turn it into a "second Lebanon," as a prelude for what he called the creation of a substitute homeland in Jordan for Palestinians.

Arafat suggested a PLO-Jordanian confederation within the framework of two independent states, which preserved Jordanian and Palestinian Arab identities, as the only possible response to Israel.



PLO chief Yasser Arafat (centre) with Indian Prime Minister V.P. Singh (right) and President Ramaswamy Venkataraman at New Delhi airport. (Reuters wirephoto)

Arabs condemn US move

ALGIERS, March 26, (Agencies): Algeria has called the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel a threat to Middle East peace and urged the United States and Europe to let them go to the West instead.

Iraq today deplored the Senate resolution agreeing that occupied Jerusalem should be the capital of Israel and said it was a challenge to all Muslims and Arabs. The Organisation of Islamic Conference has condemned the same.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the resolution was "a call to arms against the rights of the Palestinian and Arab people and challenges the sentiments of the entire Muslim world."

It urged the world to condemn the resolution. In Amman parliament members and Palestinian officials yesterday joined the OIC in condemning the Senate's resolution and warned it will harm US interests in the region.

Jordanian newspapers also lashed out at the resolution yesterday. The largest-circulation Arabic-language daily Al Rai termed the resolution "unfair, unbalanced and will hinder the Middle East peace efforts."

"The US Senate resolution is rejected, condemned, as devoted to serve the interests of Zionism," upper house speaker Ahmad Lawzi told the Associated Press in an interview.

Algerian Foreign Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali told Reuters and Paris-based Radio Beur last night that a massive influx of Soviet Jews to Israel was a very serious matter that revived the question of a "greater Israel."

"It is an issue that can damage Arab public opinion, which is extremely sensitive on this question, and could block attempts to engage the Middle East peace process," Ghozali said.

Egypt bid to calm down inter-communal tension

CAIRO, March 26, (Reuters): Egypt announced today it would send peace caravans of Christian and Muslim leaders across the country in a bid to calm inter-communal tension.

"We will not accept that Egypt be turned into another Lebanon where Christians and Muslims fight each other," Religious Affairs Minister Mohammed Mahjoub told a conference of Muslim and Christian clergymen.

Serious sectarian strife is rare in Egypt. But this month rumours that Christian pimps were using Muslim girls as prostitutes prompted two weeks of violence in the rural province of Menia in upper Egypt.

A total 337 people were arrested after various incidents in which Muslim hardliners, incensed by the rumours, set fire to Christian houses, churches, shops and cars.

Interior Minister Mohammed Abdel-Halim, giving the first official account of the troubles, told parliament yesterday that there was no truth to the prostitution stories.

Mahjoub said the incidents in Menia had shown how "a small spark starts big fires." He said the government had decided to send convoys of Muslim clergymen and Christian church leaders to calm people down and preach brotherhood and co-operation.

Egypt has never before run joint Christian and Muslim peace campaigns, although a convoy of Muslims has been touring the country for the past year.

Bourguiba restless in retirement

TUNIS, March 26, (Reuters): Former Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba is growing restless in compulsory retirement and has been trying to seek clarifications on his legal status, family sources said today.

Bourguiba, who ruled Tunisia from independence in 1956 until removed on grounds of senility in 1987, is living under close watch in a government house in the coastal town of Monastir. He is at least 86 years old.

He has not been charged with any offence and the authorities say he is free to go anywhere and see anyone he wishes.

But Bourguiba has twice tried to send letters to the Public Prosecutor's Department asking it to say if he is a free man.

Tunisia rivals to boycott elections

TUNIS, March 26, (Reuters): Tunisia's two main opposition parties threatened today to boycott local elections in May which could deal a blow to attempts to move the country towards a multiparty system.

Tunisia's main recognised opposition party, Movement of Socialist Democrats (MDS), said it would not take part in the elections unless the government made radical reforms in the electoral system.

"We can't take part unless we have sufficient guarantees that the elections will take place democratically," Mohamed Moada, the secretary general of the MDS, told Reuters.

The unrecognised Nahdha Movement, the Islamist group which is probably the second political force in Tunisia after the ruling party, said it was unlikely to join the elections.

"We are still watching the situation but all the indications are that we will not participate," Nahdha spokesman Ali Laaridh told Reuters.

Political sources say the smaller opposition groups have not decided whether to take part but are likely to follow the lead of the MDS and the Nahdha.

A mass opposition boycott of the elections, which must take place by the end of May, would deal a blow to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's efforts to move Tunisia towards a working multiparty system.

Moada said the MDS wants the government to revise the whole electoral code, separate the ruling party from the state and create "a political climate conducive to democratic elections."

Nahdha Movement members, standing as independents, won about 13 per cent of the vote in general elections in April 1989 but the ruling Democratic Constitutional Union (RCD) won all 141 seats in parliament, partly because of the voting system.

The government has recently offered some opposition parties to introduce an element of proportional representation in local elections but not in general elections.

Under the present system for parliamentary elections, the party which wins the most votes in a constituency takes all the seats there. A constituency may have up to nine members.

The opposition parties accuse the government and ruling party of continuing practices associated with a one-party state.

They say the state-run media largely ignores the opposition and that the administration interfered in the 1989 elections.

The government says the only problem is that the opposition parties have not sold their ideas to the public.



Cache of bones

A fighter of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front opens one of about fifty ammunition boxes full of skulls and other human bones. The bones were hidden at Ethiopian military base near the Red Sea port of Massawa that fell to rebels last month. (Reuters wirephoto)

Aoun: wait for 'surprise'

Battles rage in Christian enclave

BEIRUT, March 26, (AP): Gunbattles erupted in Beirut's Christian sector today after night-long artillery and tank fire duels in the hinterland northeast of the capital. Police said six people were killed and 14 wounded.

That raised the overall toll to 772 killed and 2,143 wounded since Jan 30, when Army Gen. Michel Aoun moved to crush Christian warlord Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces militia.

It was the third straight day of extensive violations of a March 3 ceasefire, sharpening fears of a new round of full-scale fighting to resolve the inconclusive power struggle for control of Lebanon's Christian enclave.

Aoun told an estimated crowd of 10,000 clapping, cheering supporters around the presidential palace in suburban Baabda today to wait for a "surprise that will reverse the equation in a final and definite way." He did not elaborate.

Police reported Aoun's troops and Geagea's militiamen were locked in gunbattles on the streets of East Beirut's residential district of Sin El-Fil, the industrial Dora neighbourhood and a cluster of abandoned government compounds in Badaro.

"They are shooting at each other with machine-guns and rocket-propelled grenades, but neither side seems trying to push for territorial gains thus far," said a police spokesman at midday (1000 GMT). He cannot be named under standing rules.

Both sides also traded sniper fire across the coastal highway tunnel on the Dog River boundary between Aoun's positions in the Metn province and Geagea's lines in Kesrouan region, the spokesman said.

Ten of the wounded were hit by sniper fire on the Dog River crossing.

He said Lebanon's main power-generating plant in militia-controlled Zouk just north of the river took several

direct hits in the nighttime shelling.

The plant ceased to function from the first day of the confrontation, the worst intra-Christian fighting since the civil war with Muslims broke out 15 years ago.

That left the Lebanese capital and its environs without city power or water for nearly two months. Officials of the state-run electricity authority have said repair works on the Zouk plant would take at least five months.

The police spokesman said Lebanese Forces gunners retaliated for the Zouk bombardment by shelling a makeshift harbour that Aoun's troops reportedly set up in Antelias, five miles (8 kms) north of Beirut.

Geagea's militia captured Beirut port in the early days of the showdown, stripping Aoun of the only facility to get replenishments of arms and ammunition for his army by sea. The general has no airport and all overland inlets to his enclave are blocked by hostile Syrian troops.

Military sources close to Aoun, speaking on condition of anonymity, said his engineering corps turned the Golden Beach Hotel in Antelias into a tiny ship-ping harbour three weeks ago.

Ships have since unloaded consignments of 155mm howitzer shells and 120mm mortar rounds from Iraq and France for Aoun's army, the sources said.

Police said they could verify neither the reports that Aoun set up a harbour in Antelias, nor the reports of ammunition shipments.

Several Beirut newspapers and radio stations have said that Aoun was setting the groundwork for a new offensive to crush the Lebanese Forces after receiving the ammunition deliveries.

Arah mediators are trying to mobilise financial and military aid to help Lebanese President Elias Hrawi oust Aoun and rebuild the war-ravaged country. Algeria's foreign minister said.

Israel airs 'love and the intifada' affair

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, March 26, (AP): Viewers got the latest delicious detail on television yesterday about the affair that is scandalising Israel — the case of the Israeli Army captain suspended from his job over alleged trysting with a young Palestinian woman.

The wronged wife in what's being called the "love and the intifada" affair appeared as a blacked-out figure on the evening TV news to support her husband's story that he was really trying to recruit the dark-haired Arab woman as an informer.

The story of Capt. Avi Marak and 20-year-old Abir Mattar has hit newspaper front pages this week and largely because — with the wall of hatred that has grown up between Jews and Arabs in the intifada, or uprising — such a romance seems unthinkable.

A military source yesterday confirmed that Marak, who was a company commander for Israel's military government in the occupied West Bank, is being investigated on suspicion of "inappropriate behaviour."

According to Israeli newspapers, Marak held nightly secret rendezvous with the young woman from

the Christian village of Beit Jallah near Bethlehem for some time between four and eight months.

It all ended after Marak's wife, Ricky, found out, the Mariv daily said. Early one morning, Mrs. Marak went to the home of the Palestinian woman, who also is married, and the two got into a scuffle. The captain then hauled his wife off in a jeep.

But the shadowy figure on the evening news backed her husband's story that he was recruiting an informer to act against Palestinians involved in the 27-month uprising against Israeli occupation.

After saying some unpleasant things about Mrs. Mattar's reputation, Mrs. Marak added: "This is a relation based on (military) security."

She added, however, that her husband "never told me anything because he doesn't let me in on military affairs."

Marak, who is still being questioned after being removed from his post earlier this month, gave his informer motive to Mariv. Other newspapers noted Mrs. Mattar's family had a reputation of assisting Israeli authorities.

US visa racket: 17 charged

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, March 26, (AP): Five former employees of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv and 12 other Israelis were charged yesterday with allegedly taking part in a scheme to counterfeited US entry visas, Israel media said.

The 17 are accused of conspiring in a counterfeit ring that forged hundreds of entry visas in exchange for hundreds of thousands of dollars, the National News Agency Ilim said, quoting formal charges filed yesterday.

It said some of the visas were given to Israelis who had been barred from entering the United States because of criminal records.

A US Embassy spokesman

could not be reached for immediate comment, but US officials said no Americans were believed involved when the alleged ring first came to light with arrests last September.

The embassy released a statement at the time saying it had "instituted new procedures to minimise vulnerability to future efforts to obtain visas by fraudulent means."

The accused were charged on eight counts including conspiracy, giving and receiving blackmail, counterfeiting, and dealing in foreign currency, Ilim said.

It said the embassy employees sneaked visa stamps and documents out of the embassy in their clothing.

MIDEAST BRIEFS

Libya-Sudan merger: Sudan's Libyan-style "popular committees" have approved the integration pact signed between leaders of the two countries earlier this month, the official Sudanese News agency Suna said on Sunday.

It said the 1,500 members of the committees, a form of parliament, unanimously approved the pact agreed by military leader General Omar Al-Bashir and Libyan leader Muammar Khaddafi in Tripoli. (Reuters)

Nasser's widow dies: Thousands of Egyptians led by top politicians Monday walked in the funeral of Tahiyeh Mahmoud Kathim, widow of the late Egyptian president Jamal Abdul Nasser. She died last night at the age of 66 years.

The funeral was attended by President Hosni Mubarak, chairman of the Shura and Parliament councils, Egyptian senior officials and ambassadors of Arab and African states, in addition to the members of the July revolutionary command council and former ministers. (Kuna)

Hussein, Khaddafi talks: Jordan's King Hussein and Libyan leader Muammar Khaddafi had a rare telephone conversation on Sunday to discuss Arab responses to world events, the official news agency Petra said.

Their talks followed a weekend meeting in Libya between Khaddafi, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad and Sudan's leader Omar Hassan Al-Bashir. (Reuters)

Colonels killed in car crash: Three Turkish colonels accredited to Nato headquarters in Brussels were killed and their driver badly injured in a car crash just outside the Belgian capital on Sunday.

Police said on Monday one of the colonels died instantly when their vehicle was hit in the side by another car near the town of Melsbroek.

The two other officers died of their injuries before they could be taken to hospital. (Reuters)

Bandits, police clash: Twenty bandits and three policemen were killed in fighting between a joint army-police force and a 20-strong armed robbery gang in west Sudan's Darfur region, Sudan News Agency, Suna, said Sunday.

Reporting from Nyala, capital of south Darfur province, the agency said Al-Dikona police station recently received a report by a person saying that the gang assaulted a commercial truck and looted 4,000 Sudanese pounds of the passengers. (Kuna)

Sudan predicts peace: Sudan's minister of state for defence predicted a peace pact with southern rebels this year, a United Arab Emirates newspaper reported on Monday.

"I think a peace accord will be signed with rebels by the end of the year to solve the dispute once and for all," Osman Mohammed Al-Hassan was quoted by Al-Khaleej as saying. (Reuters)

8 Israelis on trial: Eight Israelis charged with meeting the outlawed PLO appealed for a delay when their trial opened on Monday, hoping the dovish Labour Party would take power and repeal the law.

However, the Ramle magistrates court rejected the plea, which would have postponed a trial that had been delayed three times already. (Reuters)

Saddam appoints: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Sunday appointed Abdul-Wahab Mahmoud Abdullah Al-Sabbagh as minister of agriculture and irrigation, a presidential decree read over Baghdad Television said. (Reuters)

Morocco, Namibia ties: The Kingdom of Morocco and the newly independent Republic of Namibia have established full diplomatic relations, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday. (Reuters)

Businesses catering to Asians mushroom

Sheer numbers create huge profits

MYRIAD commercial establishments and restaurants totally depending on Asian shoppers has mushroomed in Kuwait's vital trade areas like the Capital and Fahahel. Asians congregate at these places which have become a social gathering area and play an important role in the social life style away from home for many expatriate Asian workers and labourers.

What really intrigues one is the fact that all these establishments co-exist in a form of unity hard to describe, yet all work hard to compete with the large array of cheap goods displayed.

One could consider these Asian markets, which cater only to the exclusive needs of Asians as an economical extension of the cultural and social presence of a cross-section of Asians in Kuwait. Poignantly, many well-to-do Kuwaitis have benefitted from the proliferation of these Asian business enterprises. The law makes it compulsory for any establishment to have a Kuwaiti sponsor and many perceiving and enterprising Kuwaitis have seen the monetary potentials and have encashed on it by opening shops with specific items tailored to the needs of Asians.

Increase
The rapid increase of Asian communities in Kuwait, led to an increase in the purchase power of these communities on a collective basis. Consequently, large numbers of merchants have entered this market and many have stated that the geographic concentration of these markets which serve these communities is the main factor behind their commercial success.

Other merchants stated that despite the small size of Asian purchase power resulting from their penchant for high-level of savings, they still contribute significantly on a large business turnover in the area of profits.

Owners of shops located in Fahd Al Salem Street stated that they mainly concentrate on commodities purchased by housemaids and labourers. On being queried as to the reasons all shops are located one next to the other, a merchant explained that these categories of workers have very little time to shop and thus close proximity of shops, creates a fast shopping environment for these groups.

Additionally, the merchant pointed out that most of these shops are located near bus stops and transportation facilities to the rest of Kuwait areas.

Purchase power
A number of Asians interviewed stressed that these shops lighten the feeling of homesickness since they are away from their homes. Most Asians interviewed stated that what most attracts them to these shops is the availability of Asian workers at these shops which makes communicating that much easier.

Another merchant said that among Asians, Filipinos are the highest spenders, though they tend to spend more money relative to their salaries. In contrast, other Asians purchasing power is low mainly due to their habit of saving, coupled with the fact that they are not paid their salaries on a regular basis.

Florence Santos is considered one of the successful businesswomen in the local market. She was able to pave her way through the local market by beginning her professional career as a simple saleswoman and moving up the corporate ladder to become manager of a number of shops and restaurants. She also owns a hair salon for women and men. She said that the idea of establishing a commercial project successfully was based on serving Asians living in Kuwait.

GCC secretariat

Plan to computerise information

THE director of information centre at the Secretariat of GCC Mohammed Al Shatti has said that centre is looking forward to carrying out a pioneer project to store official documents and papers of the secretariat and another to link the main conference hall to directly record decisions and recommendations taken at meetings.

To achieve this aim, computers will be used in co-ordination with all other optional computer centres in the GCC states. He added that this project will be carried out through the establishment of a unified information bank to avoid repetition of activities of the computer centres.

Shatti pointed out that centre offers information and data for the secretariat of GCC quickly and is developing its relations with optional computer centres in the GCC states to achieve technical and administrative integration among these centres.

This will reduce and guide Gulf spendings in order to direct these spending to other various activities. But he added that technical co-operation between the computer centres in the GCC states and the computer centre of GCC secretariat did not bear fruits due to scarcity of technical specialists in the leading posts of Gulf computer centres and to the difference of aims and technical and manpower abilities.

Kuwait exhibition

BELGRADE, March 26, (Kuna): Kuwaiti paintings and sculptures will be displayed at an exhibition to be inaugurated today.

The external cultural relations department in Yugoslavia organised the exhibition in co-operation with Kuwait's embassy here, will display paintings, sculptures, bedouin weavings and other traditional arts.

During the ten-day fair, a prepared report on types of Kuwaiti popular arts would be circulated to visitors.



Charity bazaar

Deputy director-general of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Homoud Al Mudarri opened a charity bazaar organised by the girls students of the College of Education. The bazaar will continue till Wednesday at the girls college of education in Shamiya.

Realistic recommendations formulated for masterplan

THE Ministry of Planning organised a show to demonstrate the third revision of the masterplan of the state.

The assistant undersecretary of the Ministry of Planning for progress and follow up Bader Al Bahar explained the purpose of the show and aims of the masterplan in relation to the five-year plan.

The official said that the planning ministry included the analysis of the previous masterplans in the required consultative services and explained the difficulties that prevented authorities from applying these plans accurately. He added that the ministry in co-operation with the municipality had formulated more realistic plans and recommendations to improve the methods of practical application, including undertaking basic studies on land usage, organisational structure of Kuwait housing areas like Mansouriya and Qadisiya, and proposed recommendations for reorganising the use of lands in these areas in a more efficient manner.

Utilities
The studies also included the public transportation network, improving measures of planning development, environmental studies, entertainment projects, new cities, border settlements, government housing and beaches and islands.

Bahar added that the planning ministry has asked the consultant who made the study on the third revision of the masterplan to focus on some important points specially those relating to the building of the Kuwait man by increasing educational utilities, training centres and establishment of handicraft centres and manual industries as well as using modern technology.

Also speaking on the occasion, Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs called for co-ordination between the third revision of the masterplan and the long term strategy and five-year-plan and hoped that the masterplan will be revised every five-years.

The masterplan should take into consideration human, social and Kuwaiti traditional environmental dimensions for Kuwaiti society, the official said.

The Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Naser Al Roushan commented that the third revision should take cognisance of the requirements of housing services in view of the Public Housing Authority's shortcomings in offering adequate land for housing projects.

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Current house loan adequate, says Houti

THE Savings and Credit Bank, at the present time has no intention to increase the value of loans given to citizens to build their own houses or to buy private houses, according to a senior bank official.

Speaking on the issue, Youssef Al Houti, director-general of the bank said that authorities are convinced that the present amount of KD54,000 is adequate to cover costs of building and maintenance.

He also clarified that there is no intention to transfer the responsibility of granting real estate loans from the Savings and Credit Bank to the Public Housing Authority. He added that the bank was granting loans for industrial and agricultural projects from the inception of the bank in 1965, but it stopped giving these loans in 1974 after the establishment of the Industrial Bank of Kuwait.

Houti said that citizens who did not receive the full amount to build their houses can apply for another loan to expand or maintain their houses, provided the two loans do not exceed KD54,000.

Increases
Marriage loans had recently been increased to KD3,000, the officials said and added that KD1,000 is a gift from the state and the other KD2,000 is a soft loan that should be repaid in monthly installments. This loan is given only once, except in the case of the death of a wife. The bank approved KD106 million in loans during last fiscal year, including KD98 million for real estates and KD 8 million for marriages.

Houti pointed out that the council of ministers set up a committee and put up a charter that determines conditions under which families of dead debtors will be exempt from paying remaining installments to the Savings and Credit Bank or to postpone the collection of these installments after studying each case individually.

He added that the capital of the bank is now about KD1 billion. A decree to increase the capital of the bank will be issued shortly. But he added the paid capital of the bank is KD885 million on 12/3/1990. The deposits of different loans reached KD1,037 million at end of last month beside KD 62 million as obligations of loans that had not yet been paid to debtors, he said.

New utilities for Ahmadi

THE deputy chairman of Ahmadi Government's Council Sultan Ben Hethlain has said that the construction of four flyovers for pedestrians in the middle of Sabahiya area are being studied. The council also studied the Dahiya Centre and maintenance works at houses of Dahiya area. The council will also discuss the ability to open branches for different faculties and institutes at Ahmadi Governorate and to facilitate transportation to these places, he said.

Ben Hethlain pointed out that council of Ahmadi Governorate decided to establish a hospital for the governorate and to open the health centres after midnight. There is an intention to build a health centre to serve people at Abu-Halifa area and to build a public library for pupils in Rigga area, he added.

KU develops student affairs

THE dean of the Faculty of Arts Dr Sulaiman Al Bader has said that his three-fold plan to improve and develop performance and standards at the faculty centered on students and teaching staff affairs and enhancement of research work activities.

He told a local daily that the improvement of the students affairs would be based on an indepth study carried out to the light of the university's plan for 89/90 for which executive steps would be taken to complete this task.

He added that similar action would be adopted regarding the amelioration of teachers' affairs, which would primarily centre on the development of scientific interaction among teachers of the faculty and their counterparts in the other GCC arts faculties.

He said that the faculty would pay special attention to teachers' research work and offer fresh

Kuwaiti graduates the chance to attend conferences and symposia held abroad, in a bid to polish their skills and train them in academic work.

He pointed out that thirdly the faculty would encourage research activities particularly in the field of science and further the implementation of a higher studies programme while working to develop the faculty administration and increase the output of staff.

He stressed that the existing level of performance at the faculty complied with the level of similar faculties in the region, adding that level of graduates was good and able to serve the needs of national development as required by the local labour market.

He said the University Council would meet to discuss the establishment of a grade-scale for admission into the different departments in September.

Bahrain's quarantine laws ensure disease-free animals

By Yakub Razzaque
Arab Times staff

ARABS in general are reluctant to keep pets, particularly dogs, because of Islamic teachings that advocate strict cleanliness and healthy hygienic environment at home. However, thanks to increasing knowledge of animal education and welfare propagated by national and international organisations committed to the task of preventing

cruelty to all animals and ensuring their normal existence, Arabs are gradually learning to love certain species of animals and keep them at home as pets. In this context a growing number of affluent and middle class Bahraini families have started to keep pets at home, a leading veterinary surgeon in Bahrain revealed.

According to Dr Monie Coutts, a prominent Australian veterinary surgeon and a long-

time resident in Bahrain, Bahrain is one of the few countries in the Gulf where strict quarantine laws are enforced and animal diseases including the dreaded rabies are non-existent. This factor coupled with the growing awareness of animal education has helped to dispel the myth that most animals, particularly dogs, are unclean, as more Bahrainis have taken to keeping pets at home.

Dr Coutts said that while

No tangible results from mergers: Saleh

Bank chairmen discuss economy

A NUMBER of chairmen of local banks deliberated on the projected curve of the Kuwaiti economy during the decade of the nineties, the effects of bank mergers and the impact of local investment funds on the operations of the stock exchange market.

The chairman of the board of the Investment and Finance Company for Kuwaiti interests Najeh Hamad Musaed Al Saleh told a local daily that bank mergers reflected the need for functional interdependence and co-operation to meet mounting competition.

He pointed out that the merger usually took place between financial institutions of varying operational capacity, or between successful and powerful institutions and that the central aim is to unify the operational capacity and integrate the working experience in pursuit of better performance and optimum success.

The merger proposed among financial institutions in the present day is between institutions of similar capacities or similar financial standing which would breed no tangible result after the merger. On the contrary the result would be the disappearance of competition, the official said.

He added that some would think that the merger would lead to a drop in the administrative expenses, at a time when the administrative expenses at Kuwaiti banks are considered moderate compared with that of international banks. Translated, he said this means that no such reduction or drop is possible from the merger.

Interests
He cited an example in which the Central Bank had supplied the local money exchange companies with hard currencies to break the agreements reached between local banks, as this was detrimental to the interests of the clients and directed to serving the interests of the banks alone.

The Central Bank's decision to raise the interest rates was a responsible move aimed at keeping control over the volume of local liquidity and the dinar exchange rates, which could be understood as a step detrimental to the operations of certain financial institutions which deal in no less than KD100 million a year, Saleh said.

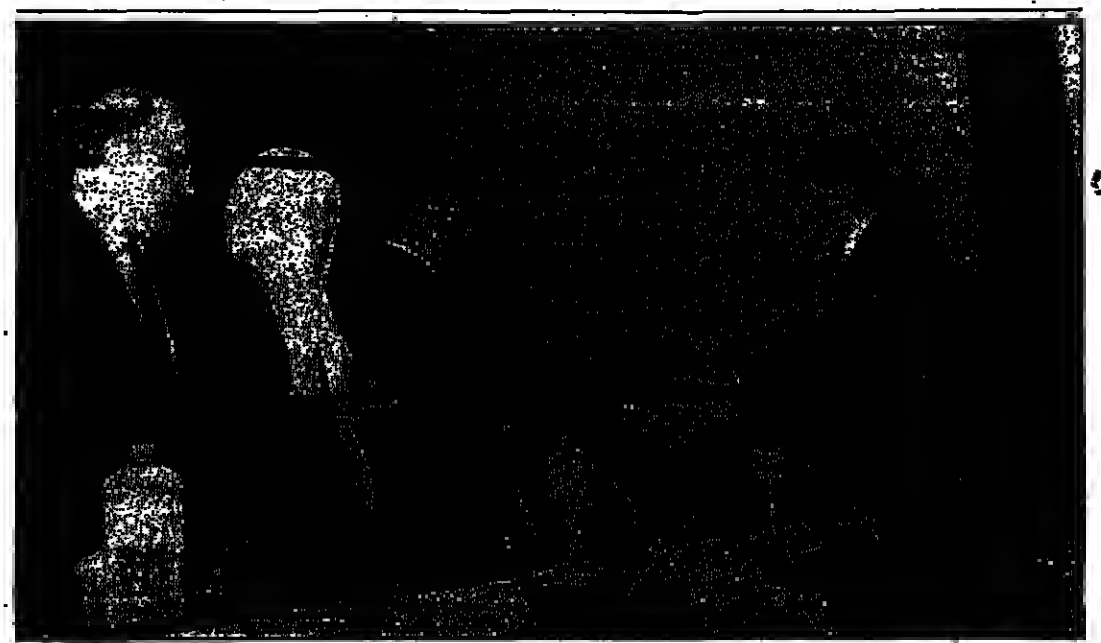
As a result, he added that the private sector, finds difficulty in launching projects that could yield total revenues not exceeding 13 per cent. Therefore a great number of projects and good

ideas had been shelved for the time being, until the interest rates go back to normal. The current situation encourages capitalists to freeze their money in deposits with steady returns and this has negatively affected real estate prices.

Rates
He stressed that normal interest rates would step up investments and activate the economic situation, contrary to the high rates which result in the freezing of funds. Moderate rates would encourage capitalists to strive for securing better returns for their money and this consequently led to the flight of capital with the intention of repatriation once the situation locally becomes convenient and promising.

He recommended that the administration of the stock exchange market prevents trading in investment funds shares, before the lapse of two years since the date of their establishment so that they could prove the strength of their financial standing.

He warned against confining trading operations at the local stock exchange market to shares of investment funds, as these were originally established to step up investment activities and not to trade in their shares.



Specialised doctors

Planning Minister and Acting Health Minister Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadi Sunday gave away certificates to a number of doctors who successfully passed a specialised training course held by the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialisations. The course was jointly organised by the institute and the Ministry of Health. The course was offered to doctors to specialise in international diseases, surgery, family medicine and Radiology.

Hereditary illnesses Pre-marital testing important: Ashkanani

DR JASEM Mohammed Ashkanani, who has been working with mentally handicapped individuals for over 11 years now at the Handicapped Care Department said that hereditary factors contribute significantly to this problem and called upon physicians and educational officials to participate in the hereditary guidance campaign.

Ashkanani added that medical examinations are important for those planning to get married particularly among families who have hereditary illnesses or birth deformations among their relatives. He stressed that all handicapped are capable of learning and development and recommended that educational officials and social workers must stress upon what handicapped individuals can learn through efforts and objective programmes.

With respect to local handicapped care foundations, Dr Ashkanani stated that in Kuwait there are several establishments which accept the responsibility to care for the handicapped namely government establishments of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, government establishments under the Ministry of Education, establishments under the full supervision of the Ministry of Public Health and local societies. He added that these establishments provide several services mainly, health services which are considered highly important to enable them to benefit socially and psychologically, social services and finally professional training services.

On the methods recommended to prevent children from being afflicted Ashkanani pointed out that many health, social and educational authorities have participated at international symposiums which were held for the benefit of the handicapped. He added that all of these symposiums have caused for the importance of supporting group scientific efforts to provide handicapped with better educational programmes and services.

Ashkanani stated that such symposiums made several recommendations in order to stem the problem namely, conducting full medical examinations on couples interested in marriage in the near future, particularly among families with proven hereditary illnesses or birth deformations. Supplying the required vaccinations against diseases which may cause birth deformations, spreading nutritional awareness among people, pregnancy before the age of forty, warning pregnant women against being exposed to radioactive isotopes (radioactivity) and conducting medical tests on newly born babies to ensure their good health.

Malaysia, Iran emerge champions of Quran meet

KUALA LUMPUR, March 26, (Kuna): Participant - Alhas Ezzam Jomoh of Iran and Hajah Faridah Mat Saman of Malaysia emerged champions of the 31st international Quran reading competition which ended here last night.

Abbas obtained 91.41 points while Faridah secured 95.58 points.

The results were announced by the chairman of the panel of judges, Dr Abdul Hamid Othman at the end of the five-night competition, organised annually by the Malaysian government.

The first runner-up to the men's section was Daud Che Man of Malaysia with 89.16 points and the second runner-up was Haji Muhammad Ali of Indonesia with 88.33 points.

The first runner-up to the women's section was Norashah Amin of Indonesia with 91 points and the second runner-up was Hajah Kamshah Haji Amir of Singapore with 89 points.

Hajah Faridah, 40, a housewife from the north-east Malaysian State of Kelantan, was also champion Qariah in 1964, 1965, 1972, 1976, 1977 and 1989.

A total of 36 participants from 26 countries took part in the competition.

Each of the two champions won \$2,000 in cash, a certificate, the challenge trophies, a return air ticket to Makkah to perform the haj and a copy of the Quran.

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Five-year plan referred to cabinet: Rashed

Telecom corporation a possibility

KUWAIT'S Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Rashed Al Rashed was quoted as saying that Kuwait's long term plan project has been referred by the Chairman of the Higher Committee for Structural Layout, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed to the Cabinet Secretariat General Saturday.

Meanwhile, Rashed told reporters that the forthcoming five-year-plan of the country has been finalised and has been referred to the Cabinet for endorsement, and will then be referred to the Higher Planning Council.

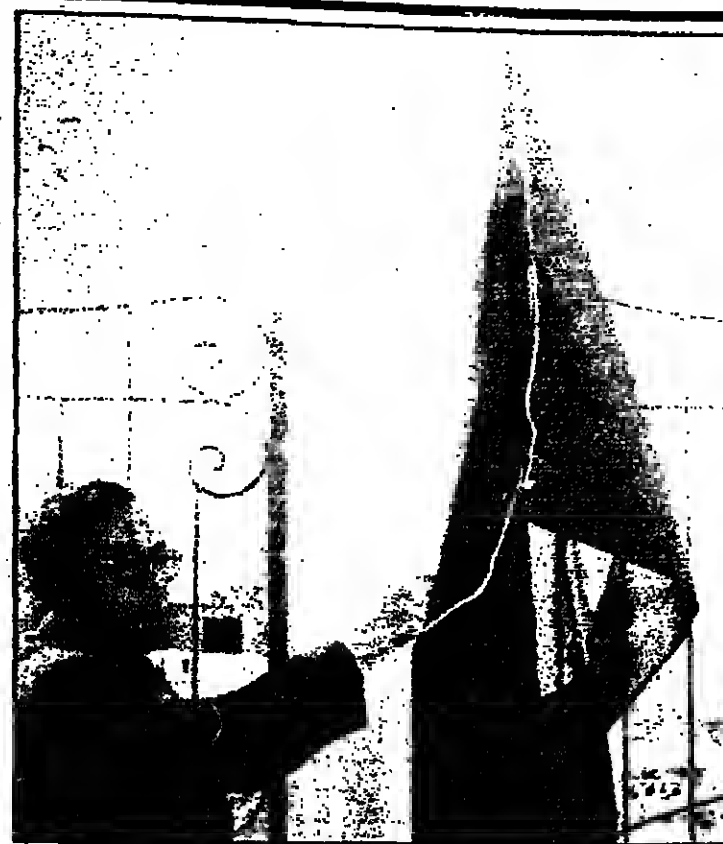
System

He added that the Cabinet to its next session will debate the recommendations

stipulated in the minutes of the meeting of the Higher Planning Council including the recommendations suggesting the setting up of a petrochemical complex proposed by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the preliminary proposal submitted by the Ministry of Communications suggesting the adjustment of the telecommunication system in Kuwait.

The latter proposal is based on the establishing of a public corporation which will possess all government assets invested in the telecommunication field.

Apart from the above, Rashed said the Cabinet will debate the service complexes of the country's governorates including the headquarters projects of these governorates besides other projects.



Bangladesh National Day

Bangladesh Ambassador K.M. Shehabuddin yesterday hoisted (left) his country's flag at the embassy premises in Adelyah to mark the National and Independence Day. Bangladesh School children sang the national anthem. A large number of Bangladeshis turned out for the occasion.

Draft bill on new business regulations finalised: Mijren

Move to protect consumers

THE assistant undersecretary for commercial affairs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Rashed Abdullah Al Mijren has said that the ministry has finalised the preparation of a new draft bill for the regulation of commercial agencies in the country.

He told a local daily that the ministry was going ahead with the implementation of the plan to carry out a comprehensive survey of all relevant laws currently in force, whereby to introduce the amendments and changes necessary to keep abreast of all economic and commercial developments in the country and in order to render these laws more flexible to meet current needs.

He said the ministry has submitted the draft bill on the regulation of commercial agencies to the Council of Ministers after a series of work sessions held especially for this purpose. He pointed out that this project is in its final stages, pending issuance by the Legislative Committee at the Council of Ministers.

He pointed out that under the proposed draft bill, all existing inconveniences and loopholes in the clauses of the enforced law would be sorted out, adding that the law covered a wide number of articles.

New articles
He said that under article one the new draft bill laid down the conditions for the operation of commercial agencies, which are mostly uncharted by the existing law.

He added that article six stated that re-registration of the agency in the name of the new agent will not be permitted unless the first agency was dissolved with the consent of both

parties, or cancelled by court ruling and that the company has met all its obligations to the first agent and made all reimbursements and payments due upon the dissolution of the agency.

These provisions are new and not stated by the enforced law, Mijren said. He added that under article seven, the obligations undertaken by the commercial agent, which are not stated by the existing law, are considered new additions that require local agents to be fully committed and serious about obligations to ensure prosperity of the commercial business and enable the commercial sector to enjoy a state of stability that would eventually lead to further protection of consumers.

Centres

Mijren pointed out that amendments introduced into the articles of the existing law included the extension of the period for submission of the re-registration application to three instead of two months. He further added that article five stated that the ministry's failure to consider the application within a 30-day period will be construed as a rejection of the application.

Meanwhile, the controller of the commercial shops licensing bureau at the ministry Ahmad Al Ansari said that the ministry was planning to open external centres to issue, amend and renew commercial licences to facilitate the processing of transactions and reduce pressure on the only such centre at the ministry headquarters.

He said that the existing number of com-

mercial licences for individual activities and shops was currently 50,000, pointing out that the department processed 150 to 200 applications daily, which ranged from seeking new licences, amending existing ones, renewing the validity of expired licences and changing the names of the owners.

He said that a number of Gulf owners of retail businesses had applied for permission to enhance their practice licence to include import activities, while more applications were expected to be submitted by Gulf citizens for new licences following the unification and operation for the Gulf Economic Common Market.

Quick

He said that the opening of new external licensing offices had been instrumental in speeding up the processing of transactions, collection of data and information and enabling clients to get their applications for practice licences processed in 5 to 15 minutes. The applicants would be given the necessary documents to get the approval from the relevant government agencies and be would be able to receive his licence within a matter of not more than 30 minutes.

Mijren said that the Licensing Department at the ministry has been successfully able to reduce time and speed up measures due to the use of computers, use of one design-format instead of a number of forms formerly used for practical purposes and lastly the reliance on staff assigned to process all sorts of transactions without the need for the applicants to refer to a number of other staff.

Incorporate handicapped, says former undersecretary

THE former undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Mohammed Abdullah Al Fahed was quoted as saying that the patronage of handicapped people in Kuwait has not yet reached the targeted level.

In an interview with a local daily the official confirmed the importance of concentrating on the prequalification process of handicapped people which should be mostly represented by intensifying training courses in different fields.

He added that the threshold of the administrative development era should be represented by an analysis of the current problem scientifically, and precisely.

He stressed that the policies of sporting clubs and popular unions should be more comprehensive and specifically pointed out that coteries and bloc phenomena in the sports arena should be surmounted. In this context Fahed has called for the establishing of a higher council for sports.

Meanwhile, the official confirmed the importance of revising the labour law of the private sector from time to time in the light of labour market requirements.

He said that housemaids offices should be subject to the supervision of the ministries of social affairs and labour and interior.

Speaking of the co-operative sector, the official said that some co-operative societies were not performing their roles properly, while some others had committed several infringements which resulted in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour to eventually dissolve the relevant board of directors.

He commented that a few directors in the co-operative sector were working sincerely, and added that the outcome of co-operative activities should be evaluated through the economic and social signs to be realised in the course of the co-operative march.

The co-operative entity should provide progress and development through adequate recruiting of funds and human resources, the official said. He called for developing the co-operative movement in the country by preparing co-operative cadres and also called for the strengthening of relations between the co-operative sector and the state authorities to achieve co-operative movement objectives.

He added that the co-operative societies should play their social role together with its economic one, clarifying that the economic objectives could be realised through the provision of consumer goods at reasonable prices, while social objectives could be realised through the extending of several social, cultural and educational services including participation in finding out necessary solutions for some social problems.

Speaking of the delinquency phenomenon, the official has confirmed the importance of the families role towards obviating of such a phenomenon.

Kuwait determined to ensure prosperity: report

Economic strategy highlighted

LONDON, March 26. (Kuna): A new report "Kuwait 90: Focusing on People and Prosperity" was published today by the specialised publication, Middle East Economic Digest (Meed).

In its special supplement, Meed said that Kuwait is committed to the cause of Palestine and to the needs of its fellow Muslims.

The weekly said that while West and East take heart from the end of the cold war and the efforts to promote disarmament between the world's two major power blocs, "Kuwait has sought to remind the world that one of human rights and self-determination that needs their attention."

It quoted the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, while addressing the UN General Assembly in September 1988, as calling on all countries "to heed more attentively the Palestinian voice and to demonstrate open mindedness and tolerance."

More recently Sheikh Jaber has called for "practical tangible action" to resolve the issue of Palestinian self-determination. In the survey sponsored by the Ministry of Information in Kuwait and the Kuwait Investment Office and a number of Kuwaiti firms, Meed said that the Amir of Kuwait had delivered a message to the UN during events marking the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people in November 1989, reminding member states "that the heroes of the Palestinian uprising were standing fast in the face of a brutal

occupation". Meanwhile, the report made it clear that the people of Kuwait have long taken pride in their international and cosmopolitan outlook based on their historic trading links with the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe.

"When the state achieved its independence in 1961, this outlook was transformed into a foreign policy based on two principles of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence."

Recognition
Meed also stressed that "Today under the rule of the Amir who assumed power in 1977, Kuwait has taken the lead in promoting policies aimed at bringing together east and west, north and south."

Although many of its negotiations to achieve these ends are "conducted behind the scenes away from the banner headlines of the world's media, Kuwait's efforts are being increasingly recognised by the international diplomatic community, the UN and the two superpowers", it continued.

The weekly also referred to the Amir's role as the chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) and it emphasised that the Amir has also "taken the lead in furthering the interests of all the Muslim countries and peoples."

Turning to the oil sector the magazine said that more than half a century after the discovery of oil, "Kuwait has now embarked on a 20-year development strategy aimed at making the state the main financial centre of the Arabian Gulf."

Meed said that despite the

volatility of the international oil market during the past decade, Kuwait has prudently used its oil revenues to amass an international portfolio of property, shares and industrial investments currently estimated to total some \$95 billion.

"Now it is determined to ensure its future prosperity by using these foreign assets as a base to expand its services sector globally, a move that will not only make the best use of its oil earnings, but also provide access to training and jobs for its own indigenous population."

Strategy
Meed went on to say that the long term strategy known as the Kuwait Economic Study has been developed by a team of Kuwait experts working in close co-ordination from international academic experts.

The supplement also covers the activities of Kuwait University, which is looking forward to celebrating its 25th anniversary next year.

Meed painted a rosy picture of future plans to expand the university's facilities, and it said that particular emphasis is to be given to those areas which are deemed to be necessary to the country's national development. A budget of KD300 million has been set aside for a new campus to complement those which already exist at five different sites in Kuwait, and for the modernisation of existing facilities.

As part of Kuwait's contribution to the Muslim world, the Arab Gulf state serves as the headquarters of the Islamic Organisation for Medical Science.



Greek National Day

The Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic and Mrs Constantine Tsokos held a reception to celebrate their country's National Day. A large number of ambassadors and Kuwaiti officials attended. Picture shows Ambassador and Mrs. Tsokos welcoming Sulaiman Majed Al Shaheen, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Amir receives

KUWAIT, March 26. (Kuna): HH the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah received this morning, member of the military committee and national salvation and Minister of Interior in Guinea Lt Col Mamadou Baldi.

The minister presented to HH the Amir a message from the President of Guinea.

The meeting was attended by Kuwaiti Minister of Interior Sheikh Salem Al Sabah and the Guinean ambassador to Kuwait.

Amiri cable

KUWAIT, March 26. (Kuna): HH the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to the President of Bangladesh on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Austrian seminar

VIENNA, March 26. (Kuna): Kuwait will be the theme of a media seminar to be inaugurated here today by chairman of the Austrian Society for Oriental Studies and to be attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador in Vienna Abdul Hamid Al Awadi.

The opening of the seminar, to be held at the National Bank of Austria, will also be attended by the bank's deputy chairman and a number of Arab and foreign diplomats and senior political and economic figures.

The seminar's programme includes a series of lectures on "The Progress Kuwait Witnessed in Various Fields."

Iranian envoy

KUWAIT, March 26. (Kuna): Public Works Minister Abdel Rahman Al Houti received Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Hussein Sadiki.

The two sides discussed bilateral relations and means of boosting them.

Brucellosis campaign

KUWAIT, March 26. (Kuna): A cattle farming official said today Kuwait has remarkably reduced cases of brucellosis, a bacterial infection which affects man and cattle, as the result of a massive campaign against the disease.

Deputy director-general of the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries Dr Sultan Ahmed Sultan told Kuna in a statement that the successful 1987-89 anti-brucellosis campaign prompted the World Health Organisation to send a team to Kuwait to shoot an educational television programme on the subject.

The film, completed here recently, was designed to show means of prevention of the disease, diagnosis and how humans can receive infection from animals.

Art exhibition

KUWAIT, March 26. (Kuna): Education Minister Anwar Al Nouri today inaugurated Farwaniya schools' art exhibition at the Farwaniya joint girls school.

The minister toured the exhibition and expressed admiration at the students paintings and art works.

Meanwhile, Education Undersecretary Abdul Rahman Al Khodari patronised the Abdullah Al Salem High School's art exhibition.

Besides the pavilions for art and photography works and popular heritage the exhibition included rare historical photos for the late Kuwait Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem.

Support intifada appeal

KUWAIT, March 26. (Kuna): President of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) Barges Hmoud Al Barges today appealed to world media institutions to give the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories the news coverage it deserves and to expose Israel's brutalities against Arabs.

This is a moral duty dictated by the very ethics of the profession, Barges said.

"The sacrifices being daily offered by Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip are so great that they should awaken the conscience of the world and spur it to take action in advocating the cause of those youths, women and elderly."

"I appeal to you and to all world media to do whatever is possible to unmask Israel's ugly acts of repression against a whole people that revolted against its occupiers," he said.

The FANA president deplored the fact that the world media, which relayed to the world a true image of the intifada at its birth, have later wavered in such effort though the uprising is still alive with the death toll among Palestinians constantly on the rise.

"However, I still hope you would agree that the Palestinian uprising continues to merit ample news coverage in conformity with the ethics of our profession."



New Philippines embassy

The Ambassador of the Philippines and Mrs Mauyag Mohammad Tamano held a cocktail party to mark the inauguration of the new Philippines Embassy in Jabriya. Picture shows Ambassador Tamano with some of the guests.

Houti re-opens Amir Souk

THE minister of public works Abdul Rahman Al Houti has stressed that the primary concern of the Kuwaiti government since the establishment of the first masterplan for the state of Kuwait is the constant and regular development of existing urban facilities.

Speaking of the inauguration ceremony of Souk Al Amir Sunday in the presence of a number of ministers, Naser Al Roudhan, state minister for housing affairs, Mohammad Al Refai of Municipal Affairs, Issa Al Mazzeidi for Services Affairs, and governor of Kuwait City Sheikh Jaber Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah besides a multitude of people, Houti stressed the importance of the souk, which origi-

ally was called the Internal Market, from the political, economic and social viewpoint, due to its strategic location close to the Seif Palace.

He pointed out that a number of historical factors also made this facility occupy a special place in the hearts of people, adding that the requirements of the renovation works necessitated the removal of certain old popular markets to give way to urbanisation.

He stressed that the urban renovation of existing old features and development of these facilities to meet the requirements of modern life received full support of HH the Amir, and HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

EDITORIALS

ARAB TIMES

Thought for today

NOTHING is more powerful than habit — Ovid, Roman poet

Rebels launch attack

Offensive may be undecided

KABUL, (Reuters): Islamic rebels have attacked strategic Afghan cities to launch their annual spring offensive, but diplomats say the renewed fighting is unlikely to be decisive and predict the 11-year-old war could drag on for years.

The diplomats said the mujahideen rebels were unlikely to derive any advantage from a failed coup attempt earlier this month against the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

President Najibullah appeared firmly in control after the coup, led by Defence Minister Shahmawaz Tanai who has now sided with the Pakistan-based rebels, they added.

"Najibullah can derive great satisfaction that most of the army stayed loyal," one Asian diplomat said.

"If the government has lost a few planes, some tanks, military hardware in the coup attempt, then the Soviets will make good on the losses," he said.

The Soviet Union sends some 25 plane-loads of food and military supplies a day to prop up Najibullah.

The rebels have attacked several cities in southern Afghanistan over the past week, with the government reporting 39 mujahideen killed in an attack near the besieged city of Khost on Saturday.

Independent confirmation of the report was not available.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Naqib said rebels were also beaten back in two attacks backed by rockets and artillery on the towns of Maidan Sahr and Qalat, both on the highway between Kabul and Kandahar, Afghanistan's second city.

Kandahar itself has also come under sporadic attack in the past few days.

Attacks

Government troops and warplanes have repulsed repeated attacks on the eastern city of Jalalabad over the past week as well, the spokesman said.

"Of course they (the rebels) are trying to do something after the coup events to show their might at the beginning of the (Afghan) new year and the end of winter," Naqib said.

"It's something they do every season. In the past it came to nothing and so also this time."

The squabbling mujahideen groups based in Pakistan have announced they want to hold a shura, or traditional grand council, this spring inside Afghanistan.

"They should capture and hold a town if they want to hold a shura and move their interim government to Afghanistan," a Western military analyst in Kabul said.

The rebel interim government designed to replace Najibullah's administration is seen as lacking any real credibility until it secures a foothold inside the country.

Since the failure of their assault on Jalalabad last year, the rebels have spoken of Khost as the next best place for a temporary capital.

The mujahideen have controlled roads to Khost for much of the war and the government can only supply the garrison town by air.

Convoy

A convoy of government trucks and armoured vehicles left Kabul in late January to try to force its way to Khost but there have been no recent reports of its progress.

Last week, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said government troops had captured three mujahideen tanks in the battle for Khost.

Diplomats said the mujahideen had not used tanks before around Khost and speculated their crews may have defected to the rebels in loyalty to Tanai, who was last seen by reporters in a cave near the city.

The new fighting will probably not break the military stalemate which has gripped landlocked Afghanistan since the last Soviet soldiers left in February last year, some diplomats said.

"It could go on for another 10 years," an Asian diplomat said. "As long as there is plenty of weapons around."

The civil war has killed more than one million people, permanently disabled half a million and created five million refugees living in Iran and Pakistan.

The Soviet Union and United States, which backs the Islamic rebels, failed to reach an agreement on a political solution to the Afghan war in talks in Helsinki last week.

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1703 — Russia's Czar Peter the Great founds city of St. Petersburg.
- 1713 — Spain agrees at Utrecht to cede Gibraltar and Minorca to Britain.
- 1802 — Peace of Amiens between Britain and France, which achieves complete pacification of Europe.
- 1854 — France declares war on Russia.
- 1865 — Independent British colony of Kaffaria is incorporated with Cape Colony in South Africa.
- 1878 — Britain, fearing further Russian aggression, calls out reserve and sends Indian troops to Malta.
- 1933 — Japan announces it will leave League of Nations.
- 1941 — Yugoslavia's Prince Paul is deposed in coup following pact with Germany's Adolf Hitler.
- 1955 — State of emergency is declared in Pakistan.
- 1960 — Iraqi premier Gen. Kassem founds Palestine army.
- 1964 — United Nations peace force under Indian Gen. Gyanji take over in Cyprus; Earthquake in Alaska kills more than 100 people.
- 1968 — Yuri Gagarin, Soviet cosmonaut who flew world's first manned space mission, is killed in crash of training plane.
- 1970 — Severe earthquake strikes western Turkey, killing at least 1,087 and leaving 90,000 homeless.
- 1976 — South Africa withdraws its military forces from Angola.
- 1989 — Ethnic unrest shakes southern Yugoslavian province of Kosovo, killing two police officers and injuring at least eight other people.

De Klerk rides wave of approval

Events could turn very stormy

JOHANNESBURG, (Reuters): Dramatic political reforms and freedom for Namibia have set South Africa sailing with a fair international wind for the first time in decades, but treacherous shoals lie directly ahead.

Time is on no one's side as whites and blacks try to navigate to safety, but deep distrust between them militates against easy or quick solutions, political analysts say.

Change

White President F.W. de Klerk has set a swift course of change, achieving in months what sceptics doubted would be done in years. But the very speed has raised black expectations and white nervousness, threatening the reformist leader with trouble from the white right if he maintains his stunning pace or the black left if he slows down to consolidate his gains.

At the same time, the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela, newly released from a 30-year banning order, must obtain more for its hungry, long subjugated supporters — and, as the party aspiring to power, demonstrate it can command and control a fractious and often violent opposition movement.

The run-up to the opening on April 11 of exploratory talks between De Klerk and the ANC sees the white South African government basking in an unaccustomed glow of world approval for releasing its grip on Namibia, a colony for 75 years, for freeing Mandela after 27 years in jail, and for lifting bans on the ANC and other proscribed black and left-wing organisations.

"There is no doubt we have come in from the cold," declared a senior government official after a host of world leaders, led by the US, Soviet, West German, Japanese and British foreign ministers beat an unprecedented path to South Africa's doorstep last week to celebrate Namibia's independence.

But if South Africa, for 40 years an international pariah because of its apartheid racial policies, is to capitalise on these gains De Klerk must begin to deliver on his promises of irreversible, fundamental change, the analysts say.

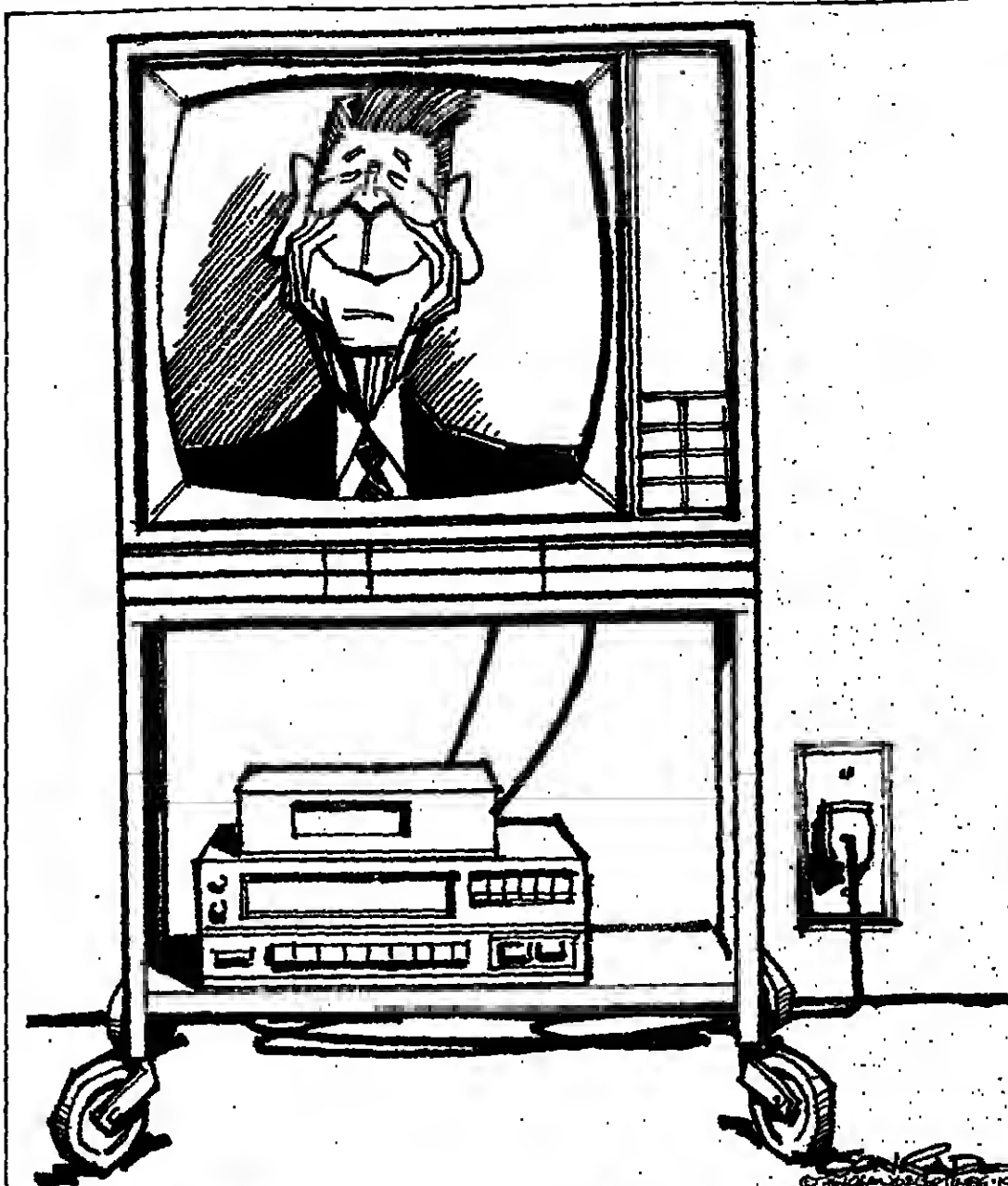
Suspicious

Black opposition groups and many of their sympathisers at home and abroad remain deeply suspicious that the ruling National Party has in fact decided to legislate itself and the white people it represents out of power after 200 years.

Veteran black activist Dr Ntshato Motlana, a close friend of Mandela's, told Reuters he remains deeply distrustful of the white government's true intentions.

"The South Africa situation is not irreversible. There can still be backsliding. The Rubicon can be crossed again and again," he said.

The point of no return would only come, he said, when blacks shared power with whites in a transitional government to prepare for a one-man, one-vote majority rule democracy, and the ANC



guerrillas had been integrated into the white army.

Government talk of "group rights" enshrined in a new constitution to protect minorities is seen by many blacks as merely a cover for continued white privilege and economic supremacy. "Group rights is completely unacceptable," Motlana declared.

From his clinic in the restive black township of Soweto, the physician and community leader predicted that on April 11 the ANC would insist that before substantive peace negotiations could begin the government must lift a three-year state of emergency.

Council charts Europe's future

LISBON, Portugal, (AP): The Council of Europe must not lower its human rights standards in order to allow the fledgling democracies of Eastern Europe to join, members say.

"We will speed up processes, but not let the standards fall," said Joao de Deus Pinheiro, Portuguese foreign minister and current chairman of the Council of Europe.

Top foreign affairs officials from 23 Western nations and seven East European countries are gathered in Lisbon for what has been billed as the largest all-European forum since World War II. The special meeting was called to discuss closer European co-operation as East bloc countries reject communist rule.

The meeting will be fully open to the Eastern European officials only in its second session Saturday. Friday, Deus Pinheiro said delegates had stressed the need to protect minority rights in the East and West.

Bloody ethnic clashes were reported in Romania this week. Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union have also been wracked by ethnic violence in recent months.

Council of Europe General Secretary Catherine

Lalumiere told a press conference Friday that minority problems also existed in the West. She added, "what is different is the scope of the problem in Eastern Europe and the seriousness if we don't solve it."

Deus Pinheiro said the council will study ways to address the minority question.

Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock called for a separate ministerial meeting to discuss the problem of refugees from Eastern European countries arriving in the West.

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe is the oldest Western organization working for European unity.

It has been largely overshadowed by the 12-nation European Economic Community, a separate trading bloc based in Brussels, Belgium.

But Ms Lalumiere says her council has gained stature as the only European organization flexible enough to adapt quickly.

Moscow views the council as a possible foundation for President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's vision of a common European home that may eventually replace the Nato and Warsaw Pact.

Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia and the Soviet

Union already have what officials call "special guest status," at the council, Bulgaria, East Germany and Czechoslovakia have applied for such status.

Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary have also requested full membership, and council officials said Friday that Hungary could join before the end of 1990 if it meets the council's criteria of democracy and respect for human rights.

Romania has made no application and is not attending the Lisbon meeting.

Deus Pinheiro said before the meeting that the council could handle what he called the "human dimension of the new Europe" — human rights, law, culture and social affairs — and the European Economic Community would be the motor for economic co-operation.

Security matters could be handled by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which includes all European nations except Albania, and the United States and Canada, said Deus Pinheiro.

The council's 1950 human rights convention established a commission and court mechanism that some say could be easily extended to cover Eastern Europe and North America.

Military buildup

SIR: The news item carried internationally by the news agencies and reported in Arab Times last week under the caption of "Alert for an unwanted war" lends a certain element of urgency to the need of diffusion and containment of the crisis. Of India and Pakistan's three wars fought over Kashmir, the recent uprising has opened a probability of a fourth war, more as a result of extraneous than design, although, both sides are claiming to avoid this. The situation is serious and needs close attention; any small provocation can trigger the unthinkable.

The conventional military strengths of India and Pakistan have continued to build up since 1971. The conventional advantage of India with 1.4 million men under arms against Pakistan's 500,000 is nearly 3-to-1 in favour of India.

At another occasion diplomatic pressures and appeals would be sufficient to cool down the heightened tensions, but not so much now; things have taken a different perspective.

The element of nuclear programmes adds a certain dimension of fatality to worsening situation. Although, so far, the military activity in the borders is more or less normal, the existence of a delicate Indo-Pak nuclear equation with their unbridled nuclear nuclear programme is a cause of alarming concern in wake of escalating tension on the ferocious political dispute of Kashmir.

The recently tested inter-range ballistic missiles by India and Pakistan — "Agni" and "Hatf" cannot be overlooked.

The two countries refuse any inspection of their atomic facilities and are not covered under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC). The caveat is a Catch 22 situation. Pakistan's refusal is based on the fact that only mutual inspection of the two countries' nuclear installations is acceptable to them and not unilateral supervision of their facilities. India refuses this stance and cites the necessity of inclusion of a global agreement on nuclear inspections.

The increase in the conventional forces and massive spending on non-nuclear capabilities by India and Pakistan itself is a good sign and best possible indicator of non-nuclear intentions of the two countries, though universally, political plausibility of extended deterrence against conventional threats is diminishing. The apparent India or Pakistan's threat to use nuclear devices in the background of an imminent conventional defeat is very much possible.

Pakistan has not been deterred by the nuclear weapons and has supported a war in Afghanistan, therefore, political confrontations multiplying into something more serious is a possibility.

If nuclear weapons exist in the reserves of any country's arsenal, then they certainly retain a larger role in overall military balances. Due to lack of mutual trust between the adversaries and absence of a strong political dialogue, the actual usage is considered possible from any side, in case of an impending defeat. India, Pakistani forces taking over Srinagar or Indian forces reaching the outskirts of Lahore.

The only plausible and sensible explanation for India and Pakistan's nuclear programme is to deter each other and avoid a scenario whereby one nation has a presumptive advantage over the other; this is against the current prevailing balance of offensive or defensive capabilities.

Anyway, most of the experts on disarmament and demilitarisation believe that the subcontinent would be safer with Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) as a prevalent strategy than with war-fighting strategies. The first strike advantage for any side is very dangerous. This creates an illusion for either side to launch and pursue the capability of waging and winning a full scale conventional and protracted nuclear war.

The only means available to the two nations is to find a way through which Mutual Assured Destruction becomes the policy. Unfortunately, it is not technically possible without the two nations acquiring similar capabilities.

To escape from the mutual hostage conditions of nuclear deterrence, the two nations could make, once they start dealing on equal basis, strategic reviews of their nuclear forces and work their policies on basis of "deterrence" rather than "war-fighting". Princeton physicist, Frank von Hippel, believes that, relatively speaking, the world would be safer with Mutual Assured Destruction as the prevailing strategy than with war-fighting strategies. When we see Agni being tested with 3,000 km range, then the general impression carried is that India is switching on to the kind of policy generally referred as war-fighting strategy. This is the policy of waging a war by targeting strategic cities, and Pakistan believes that these war-fighting contingencies and weapon-carrying capabilities make war more likely by making it more thinkable.

The instability caused due to this deployment can only be countered if the other side is also able to accomplish a matching ability. India should realise that the most likely outcome of deploying a warhead-carrying system and the new arms race will increase

military expenditure on both sides and heavily burden the economies of the two countries.

Risk

Nuclear energy, as energy source, is a high risk option and countries like India and Pakistan claiming to use the technology for peaceful purposes is not very cost effective. The nuclear industry is sick. Far from providing a cheap and plentiful supply of energy, it has provided with an expensive energy source fraught with intractable technical problems and environmental risks. Radioactive waste casts a shadow on the quality of life we are assuming our children and, hence, betraying a trust which we have in our hands for future generations shorn by virtue of our sinister habits of aggression as humans.

The status quo and the balance broken by India has unleashed incalculable damage to the movement of nuclear disarmament. The explosion in 1973 has effectively caused the premature de facto demise of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The solution of the above problem is that Pakistan and India should agree to sign Non-Proliferation Treaty and also the Regional Test Ban Treaty. This will help in re-balancing the equation, and "deterrence" can then be achieved.

The signing of these treaties is easily comprehensible as Pakistan has already on record agreed to sign, along with India, all the necessary safeguards and treaties required by IAEC.

What must ultimately be questioned is the wisdom, not to say the morality, of pouring billions of dollars of India and Pakistan's money into obtaining such useless ends where majority of the two countries' population are in dire need of development of a social infrastructure insulating them from disease and illiteracy.

Let us hope that there is no war in the face of certain destruction, and Mutual Assured Destruction becomes the name of the game — one matured and the other maturing great democracy can act responsibly enough to negotiate an era of permanent "deterrence," as there are no losers in peace and no victors in war. The nations' strength is to be matched with the nations' restraint.

Iqbal Latif,
Kuwait.

ALL Letters to the Editor must contain the writer's name and address. Publication is at the discretion of the Editor and letters are subject to the editing process for space or other reasons.

Democracy on track despite reluctance

CONAKRY, (Reuters): Posters of Mao Tse Tung, Salvador Allende and Fidel Castro, once revered in Guinea as revolutionary heroes, peep and fade along one of Conakry's pot-holed avenues.

After 26 years of hardline socialism and six years of military rule, the West African country has embarked on a painstaking democratic process due to lead to an elected civilian government by 1996.

Opposition

But political and diplomatic sources say the scheme, carefully crafted by military leader Lansana Conte, is facing growing opposition from fellow soldiers reluctant to hand over power to civilians.

"Conte is probably the only army officer in Guinea wholeheartedly committed to going back to barracks in five years time," a government official told Reuters on the condition that he was not named.

"But he may well be forced to stay longer to make sure the whole process reaches its end," he said.

Conte, an unassuming career soldier, is known for his no-nonsense approach and moderate views. The army chose him in his capacity as its highest-ranking officer to lead a bloodless coup in April 1984 a few days after the death of president Ahmed Sekou Touré.

Diplomats said Conte's surprise announcement last year that Guinea would experiment with multi-party democracy for the first time since independence from France in 1958 was seen by many as irreversible.

Lukewarm

A majority of the 17 members of the ruling Military Committee for National Recovery (CMRN) are said to be lukewarm about the prospect of relinquishing power although no dissenting views have so far been publicly voiced.

"No one in the CMRN dares speak out openly against civilian democracy but some hardliners nursing personal political ambitions are dragging their feet in the hope that things will get bad and delay the handover," the official said.

The army, deliberately sidelined for nearly three decades under Sekou Touré's dictatorship, will not readily accept the prospect of losing hard-won privileges.

"This is perfectly human but (it) creates an atmosphere of uncertainty which compounds Conte's efforts to restore democracy and attract vital foreign investment for the country's ruined economy," one diplomat commented.

The first signs of simmering discontent among the 9,500-strong armed forces emerged at the end of last year when Conte toured army garrisons in the provinces. The president, anxious to placate restless fellow soldiers, has since ordered a rehabilitation programme from Guinea's dilapidated barracks.

Conte's plan provides for a new democratic constitution, an elected president and Parliament and a multi-party system limited for the time being to two parties — as in Nigeria — to avoid ethnic divisions.

These changes have been announced earlier this year what kind of democracy they wanted. Responses are being studied by a 53-member constitutional committee chaired by Foreign Minister Major Jean Traore.

Constitutional

The panel, which has only three soldiers, is due to begin drafting a constitutional blueprint next month.

Political sources said a referendum would probably be held in November to endorse the new constitution due to come into effect on January 1991.

The CMRN will then be dissolved and replaced by a National Recovery Council (NRC) made up of soldiers and civilians. The two proposed political parties will be allowed to operate only in the last year of the five-year transitional period.

"I would not be surprised if some people would like to drag their feet in the face of such momentous reforms but the sincerity of Conte cannot be questioned," Conakry University rector Saifoullah Sylla, a law expert who sits on the draft committee, told Reuters.

Conte has publicly warned that any soldier, including himself, wanting to go into politics would have to retire from active service.

"If the people choose me (as a leader in five years time), I shall not shirk my duties. But be sure of this: Conte the soldier will then be gone," the president said recently when asked about his intentions.

QUOTE ME

"I was a physical wreck. I was emotionally drained. I was mentally burned out. The time, as compared with the other crises I had endured, I could see no reason to live, no cause to fight for. Unless a person has a reason to live for other than himself, he will die — first mentally, then emotionally, then physically. ... There was no precedent for what faced me in the 1970s. No one had ever been so high and fallen so low. No one before had ever resigned the presidency. ... former US president Richard Nixon describing his state after the Watergate scandal."

"We only had to heed the words of Lenin ... when Lenin said that the Soviet Union would take Eastern Europe. It (the Soviet Union) would organise the hordes of Asia, and then it would move on Latin America. And once having taken that, it wouldn't have to take the last bastion of capitalism, the United States. The United States would fall into their outstretched hand like overripe fruit." — Reagan on why he supported the Contras.

"Churchill won a war for Great Britain but did not win the election after it. He continued fighting, and so will I." — Imre Pozsgay on the Hungarian election.

"The special relationship is very important, and it will always be there. We have the same language, the same heritage. Straightaway, we can sit down and do business in a spirit of fundamental friendship." — British Premier Margaret Thatcher on US-British relationship.

"I don't want to hang around in Lebanon to see whether I will survive or not. Our society has disintegrated. There is no place anymore for young educated people. ... I am 26 years old and have not yet achieved anything in my life. We stayed thinking we will get a chance to rebuild our country, but it was like loving a woman who did everything in her power to drive you away. At least when you work hard and you build a house and a business, you know you won't be destroyed by shelling. They will last." — A Lebanese on the Lebanese crisis.

"Lithuanian was the first language I knew, went to kindergarten and couldn't speak with my classmates. I have been very active in Lithuanian organisations in the West. I am a member of the Lithuanian World Youth Organisation. And my activities here are just a natural extension of my general involvement in the Lithuanian community." — A Lithuanian in North America on events in Lithuania.

Britain's mega-hero of rock



Phil is a favourite of Princess Diana and has been involved with the Prince's Trust charity

HE is the most unlikely looking mega-hero of music... short, with receding hair, bitten nails and a face that could belong to your favourite uncle.

And Phil Collins would not even be in the designer gear if guitarist and near-neighbour Eric Clapton hadn't grabbed him and told him: "You look awful. We're going shopping."

But, at 39, Collins beat all the youngsters to pocket the award for top male singer in Britain — just as he was setting off on a mammoth nine-month solo world tour.

He has weathered more than a decade of the changing trends in music. So popular is he now that, before he had finished packing his bags for the opening round of concerts in Japan in February, all 10 dates at huge London venues in April and May were sold out.

Yet this most talented singer-drummer-pianist admitted he was as nervous as a new boy before the start of the superbly staged tour in Osaka that had the usually restrained Japanese leaping to their feet and cheering wildly.

If Collins does not look the superstar, he does not live it either. His Surrey country home is large, warm and comfortable but it is stockbroker rather than pop-star luxury. There is a log fire but no Jacuzzi.

Unlike other rockers who tour with a huge retinue, Collins travels with just one personal assistant. He says: "I have a lovely house but we don't drink champagne every night. We have a housekeeper who cleans the house three hours a day and a gardener. We have no nanny for our baby, Lily."

"My wife Jill cooks and I do the washing up. I have my duties. I always put Lily to bed. We live on a budget. Jill draws an amount of money out each week and whatever is left over she puts in a kitty for Christmas presents."

"If a plumber calls, I answer the door to him. I don't have a secretary. I answer all my letters myself. My car is a three-year-old BMW."

And if Jill wants a night off cooking, it is more likely that Phil will pop out to a local takeaway than that they will be spotted in an expensive trendy restaurant.

Phil says: "I am very cautious with money because that is the way I grew up. We never had that much money. I still think the bubble's going to burst. Something could happen and I've got a family to take care of."

His big extravagance is his designer wardrobe by Gianni Versace. He says: "Eric took me to Versace in Milan and I bought a few things on his advice. When I got home, Jill said she loved them and I've been wearing his stuff ever since."

Collins, who grew up in a three-bedroomed semi-detached home in Hounslow with his building-society manager father and mother who ran a London drama school, does not consider it an extravagance to take his wife and baby daughter with him on his tour.

He has even had tiny ear muffs made specially to protect Lily's ears when she appears at concerts.

For Phil blames the pressure of work in the early days of the pop group Genesis as a contributing factor in the break-up of his marriage to first wife Andrea — a mistake he is not about to repeat.

He says: "Dialogue between me and my first wife is still going on about why my marriage broke up. We can't agree. But I was not there when I should have been."

In the late Seventies, besides Genesis, he was also working with Brand X. The situation came to a head, he says, when he spent nine months on tour with Genesis and returned to find his wife a stranger.

"I never thought it would come to that," he says. "We were so much at part of each other's life. We met at school when I was 13, real storybook stuff. I think the split happened because I was working such a lot."

His biggest concern when they divorced in 1980 was that his daughter Joley, now 18, and son Simon, 14, would not have a father there when they needed him. They now live in Canada.

Collins is in regular telephone contact with them and they spend six

Phil is no handsome hunk but he can't help being a hit



The Great Train Robbers from the film Buster



Phil with the other members of Genesis

weeks of their summer holiday with him every year. He and his second wife, who was an American teacher, even waited until they were in their teens to start their family.

"We wanted to wait until they were old enough to understand it," says Phil. "That was one of the first things we thought of, that maybe — with them not living with me — they might think 'Dad's suddenly got other kids of his own' and that I was deserting them."

He talked it over with them first. Both are delighted with their new half-sister. And Lily has even become a bond between Collins' first and second wives.

Collins says: "They haven't always been friends but now they get along well. My ex-wife loves Lily and even wants to be her auntie. I think it's great she wants to be involved."

It was shortly after his marriage broke up that Collins met Eric Clapton, then happily married to Patti Boyd. He says: "Eric was great to me then. I looked at him and Patti and saw what I thought was the perfect marriage."

"They were good company and encouraged me to think there might be happiness out there somewhere for me, too."

Ironically, Eric's marriage then collapsed and it was Phil's turn to be agony aunt. But unlike Eric, who turned for a time to drink to forget Patti, Collins had turned only to music.

The songs on his first solo album, *Fare You Well*, were the therapy of a

man in despair but "too well-adjusted and sensible to do anything to excess".

Now, a decade after the divorce, he is still a master of the love song but his latest solo album *But Seriously* has gone beyond personal pain to confront wider issues.

That's just *The Way It Is* is about Northern Ireland, *Colours* about the colour issue in South Africa and *Another Day In Paradise* confronts homelessness.

Collins, who has given a charity for the homeless for the use of *Another Day In Paradise* for its TV advertisements, says: "I am getting more disillusioned about things generally."

"There are homeless beggars in the shadow of Capital Hill. I'm not on anybody's side but surely we can see all the fighting isn't going to get anyone anywhere. My lyrics are naive because I can't see why governments can't accept simple solutions."

Collins' social concerns go beyond music to action. He played both the London and American Live Aid concerts and has been involved with Prince Charles in his charity, the Prince's Trust, since 1983.

He says: "I'm the person they selected to be the trustee for the rock world which made me feel scared but very flattered."

"I played at Charles' 40th birthday party at the Palace. It was wall-to-wall Royalty. I did half an hour of my hits. He and Princess Diana do seem to enjoy my music."

One of Collins' precautions against letting work get in the way of marriage a second time is organising his life so he can work as much as possible at home.

He has turned a bedroom of his home into an office with recording equipment where he writes and records. To prepare for his current tour, he hired a hall and shut himself away to rehearse all day. But the hall was only a five-minute drive away.

Collins says: "All I ever wanted to do was to be a drummer who was respected by other musicians. I already knew I wanted to be a drummer by the age of five. My uncle made me a drum kit then."

"When I was 12, I made the ultimate sacrifice and sold my train set to buy a proper one. Later I discovered it wasn't my train set at all but my brother's."

Phil went from Chiswick County Grammar to the Italia Conti stage school and made his acting debut at 14 as the Artful Dodger in *Oliver*. He says: "When I was 14, I had it all mapped out. I'd be in a group until my late twenties, then I'd be in a swing band, and I'd finish my playing days in an orchestra pit in the West End."

When I was in *Oliver*, I used to look down into the pit and think, 'That's where I'll end up'.

He returned to acting to make the film *Buster* with Julie Walters, playing one of the Great Train Robbers. His performance won critical acclaim.

Collins himself was not impressed. He says: "It was just a terrible waste of time. I don't feel I have arrived as an actor. I have to play something different to prove I can — a deadly serious role or an out-and-out comic."

Another movie is in the pipeline, although Phil regards it as more of a joke than the ultimate test of his dramatic talents.

He was always being compared, he said, with Bob Hoskins. Then someone compared him with Danny DeVito. "I thought it might be an interesting combination," he says. "He was kidding when he said they should play *The Three Bears* together. But Hollywood took it seriously."

Now it looks likely that 20th Century Fox will put up a multi-million dollar stake to finance a modern version of the fairy story. Kim Basinger has asked to play Goldilocks.

"At the moment she'll be disappointed," says Phil. "The script doesn't call for a young Goldilocks. It will be about ageing and how to deal with parents."

It isn't a good experience, I'll do one more movie to find out. Collins is reckoned to be worth £25 million although he claims to be too bad a businessman himself to know.

He has been able to afford to replace the sacrificed train set but rarely has time to play with it since Lily, whom he describes as "absolutely perfect," arrived a year ago.

Phil keeps ducks, works out every second day in his home gym, goes to watch football once in a while and occasionally to the local pub "but only for half an hour."

Image He would love, he says, to live down his Mr Nice Guy image. "I have been doomed with this Mr Nice Guy thing," he says. "I am much more extreme than people tend to think. I can sit all night and not say much. I become obsessed with things. And I have a very short fuse these days."

The trouble with this is that, if you ask anyone who has worked with him what he is really like, they all say he is one of the nicest people in the music business.

He is a shy star who admits he is "more comfortable with 100,000 people wanting me to sing than I would be in a room with two girls that I did not know."

One thing that gets him down is the fans who knock on the door of his home, asking for autographs. "I need some space at weekends because my life during the week is pretty hectic," he says.

So does he tell them where to go? "I'm very rarely rude because they've summoned up the courage to do it," he says. "And he wonders why he is stuck with the Mr Nice Guy Tag!"

Happy birthday



Tanya Tharakan turns 10 today March 27



Anil Anwar turned 3 on February 13



Farzana Patel turns 3 today March 27



Ambrish Sadhu turned 6 on March 26



Ranjini Sen turned 7 on March 23



Karthik Mittu turned 9 on March 23



Heba Dalvi turned 1 on March 17



Anirudh Mannan turns 6 on March 28



Maryam Zafar turns 8 on March 28



Suresh Wadhvani turns 4 on March 28



Shubangi Ramgopal turns 9 on March 28



Zainab Nasreen turned 5 on March 18

Just for laughs!

My uncle knows a good deal when he sees one. He went into this shop to get the Financial Times, and the woman said, "It's going up tomorrow."

My uncle said, "Right. I'll have 200 copies of today's."

My sister went to the doctors". She said, "You know doctor, I keep thinking I'm an apple."

He said, "Well come a bit closer, I won't bite."

She said, "Doctor, my stomach keeps sticking out. Can you give me anything to keep it in?"

He said, "How about a paper bag."

"Today is my twenty-fifth wedding anniversary."

"Congratulations."

"Yes, I've been married twenty-five times."

Mr Donovan had spent the evening visiting his old friend Mr Moore, but when the time came for him to leave there was a sudden thunderstorm and the rain began to fall in torrents.

"You'd better stay the night," said Mr Moore.

"Thanks, I will," said Mr Donovan. "I'll just pop home for my pyjamas."

Freddie had persuaded Amanda to marry him, and was formally asking her father for his permission.

"Sir," he said, "I would like to have your daughter for my wife."

"Why can't she get one of her own?" said Amanda's father, disconcertingly.

How's your new wife's cooking then, Barry?"

"Not up to much. She can't even boil the washing-up water without burning it!"

Magic for beginners

Balancing a glass on a playing card

By Marco, the magician

BALANCING an ordinary drinking glass full of Vimto on the top edge of a playing card appears to be very difficult. Nevertheless, it can be learnt with a little practice, provided you know the trick that goes with it.

Following is the procedure: take an ordinary playing card and show it to your audience. The card will balance the glass of vimto, so pass round the glass, too. Having dispelled fears that you're playing unfair, now set to work.

Hold the card upright, thumb at one edge (side), fingers at the other, with the exception of the fore-finger which stays behind the card. Using the right hand to set the glass on the edge of the card, raise the hidden fore-finger so that it serves as a support. The glass should be placed on the card edge in such a manner so that its centre is slightly to the rear of the card, making it all the easier.

After a few trials, the balancing can be done in a convincing style but, mind you, it is most effective to make it look like a delicate, difficult job.

The vanishing match sticks. The magician on stage

shows a match box to his audience, opens the box, to show it full of match sticks. He removes a matchstick from it and strikes, then utters his magic charms "BIM-SALEE-SAM" and presto! the match box is empty.

This may sound incredible, or just as incredible as it looks — if you have seen a professional magician do it on the stage. The magic, not a sleight of hand, is based on a very simple trick. Here it is:

The match box looks ordinary but it is not so, it has to be specially prepared for the trick. Prepare the match box by sticking a label (the same type of the front) on the back side of the match box. Now take the drawing box out and glue a set of match sticks (except one — the one used for lighting) at the back of the match box drawers so as to cover its entire surface (or breadth). Empty the box, slide the drawer back in its place and you are ready for the trick.

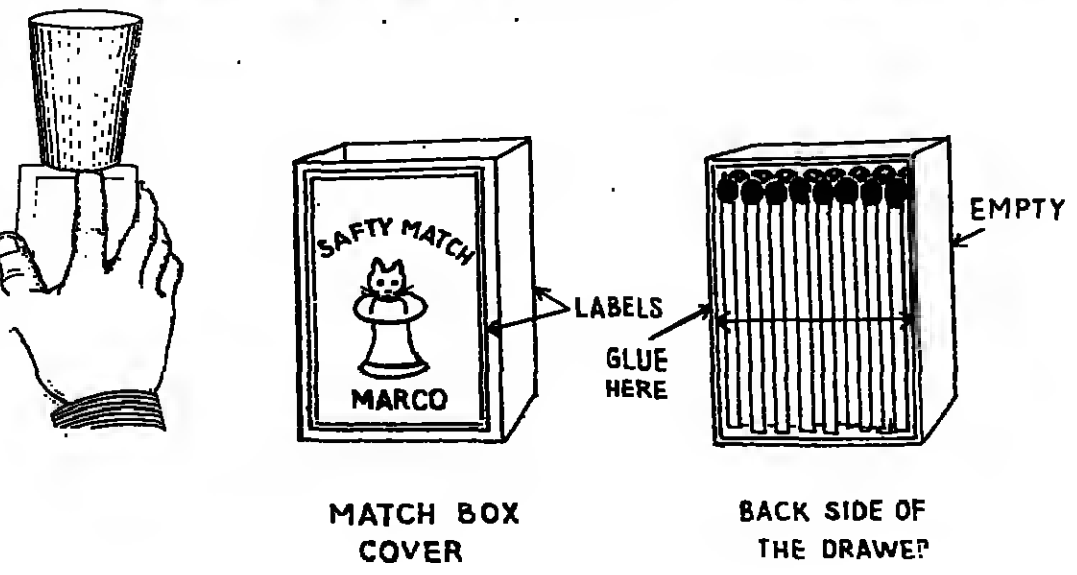
Here you have to pay a little attention to the presentation of the trick to obtain good results. First, show the audience the full match box (what you actually do is show



Marco the magician, 403708, Goa, India.

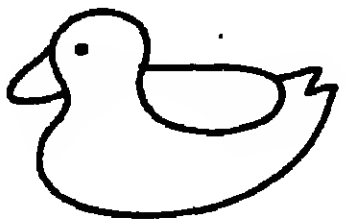
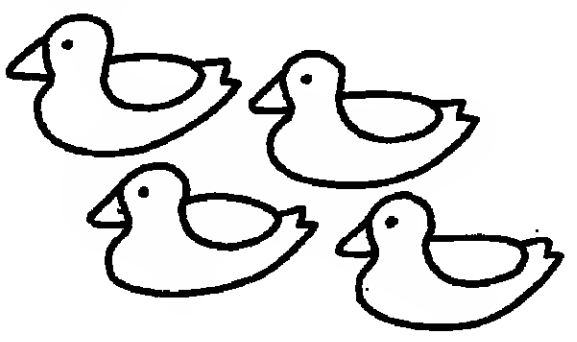
the bottom side of the drawer which has the set of sticks glued to it — but to the audience it looks like a full match box). Now remove the loose stick, close the box, and light the stick.

Waive your hand with the match box, and pronounce the magic words "BIM-SALEE-SAM". Open the match box (the drawer in the correct side now) and show it to your audience, and here, the box just full has turned empty with your magic spell!!! So long!



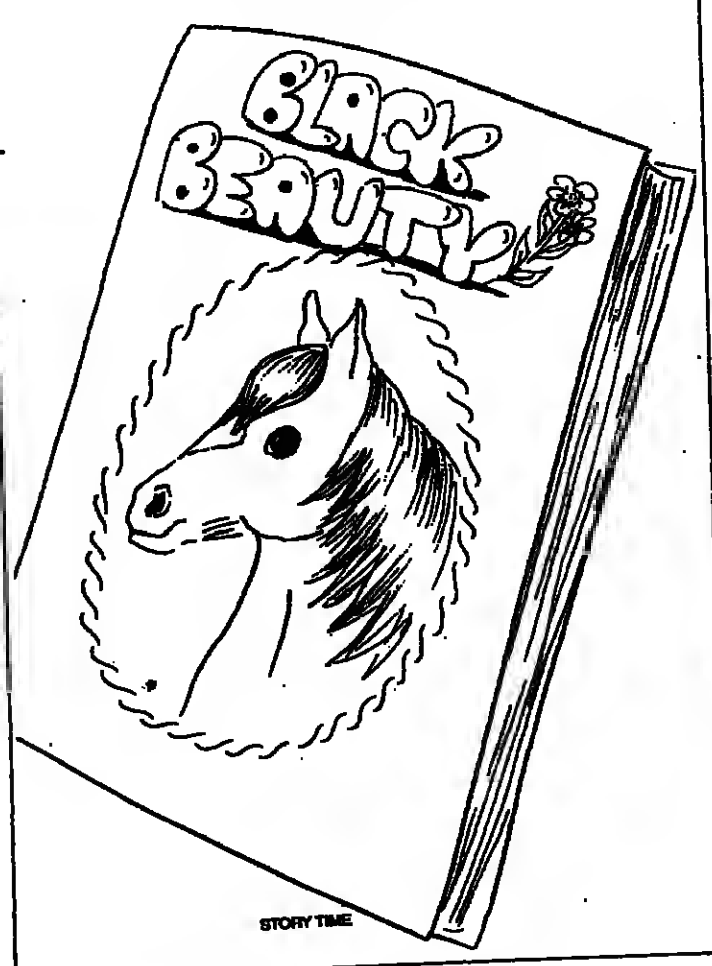
Colour in the most

Colour in the group with the most ducks



JUNIOR TIMES

Colour timing

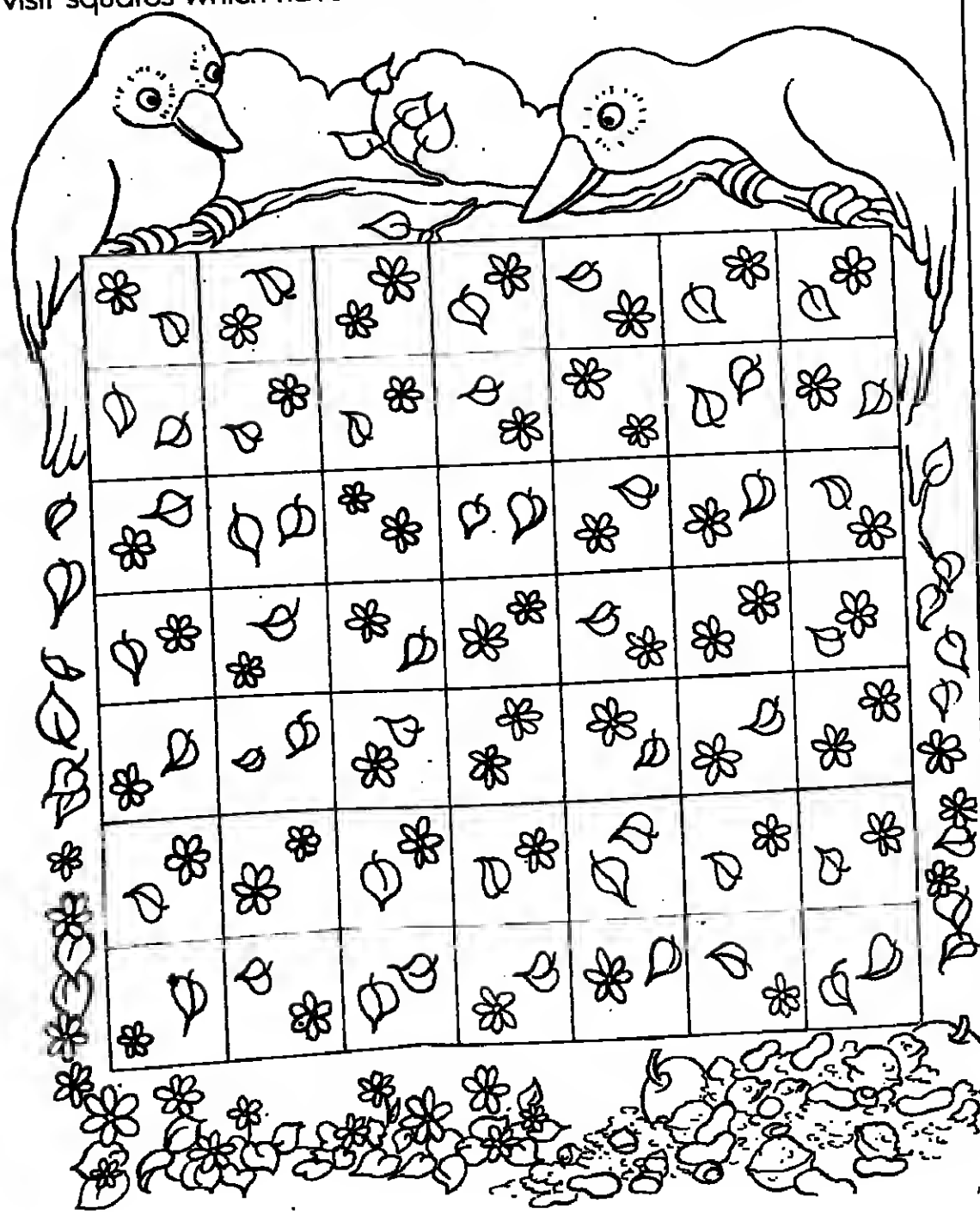


Join the dots



Feeding time

Help the birds find their way to the food pile. Start in the top left-hand square, and move towards the bottom right-hand square. You can move across, up and down, but not diagonally. You can only visit squares which have one flower and one leaf in them.



Dear Junior readers,

Ramadan Karim. This month is a Holy month in which all Muslims around the world fast from dawn to dusk. It is a month of special prayers and each deed you do, you will be awarded ten times more than that during all other months.

If you do not fast, think carefully. Fasting is a good way of cleansing your body from all the fatty foods you eat all year round. It is very healthy, even though it can be uncomfortable in the heat.

Manal

To ride a horse

To ride on a horse, that would be great to gallop around all day to race over fields and jump over hedges in an ever so posh looking way.

My name is Adham and as you can see I'm no taller now, than my own mother's knee. I wish I could climb upon that big horse, but being just two, I'm too little of course.

You wait till I'm four, then I'll be bigger and mum won't have to help me. I'd be free as a bird, on that horse of mine and I'd ride forever, just watch ME.

J. Hodgson.

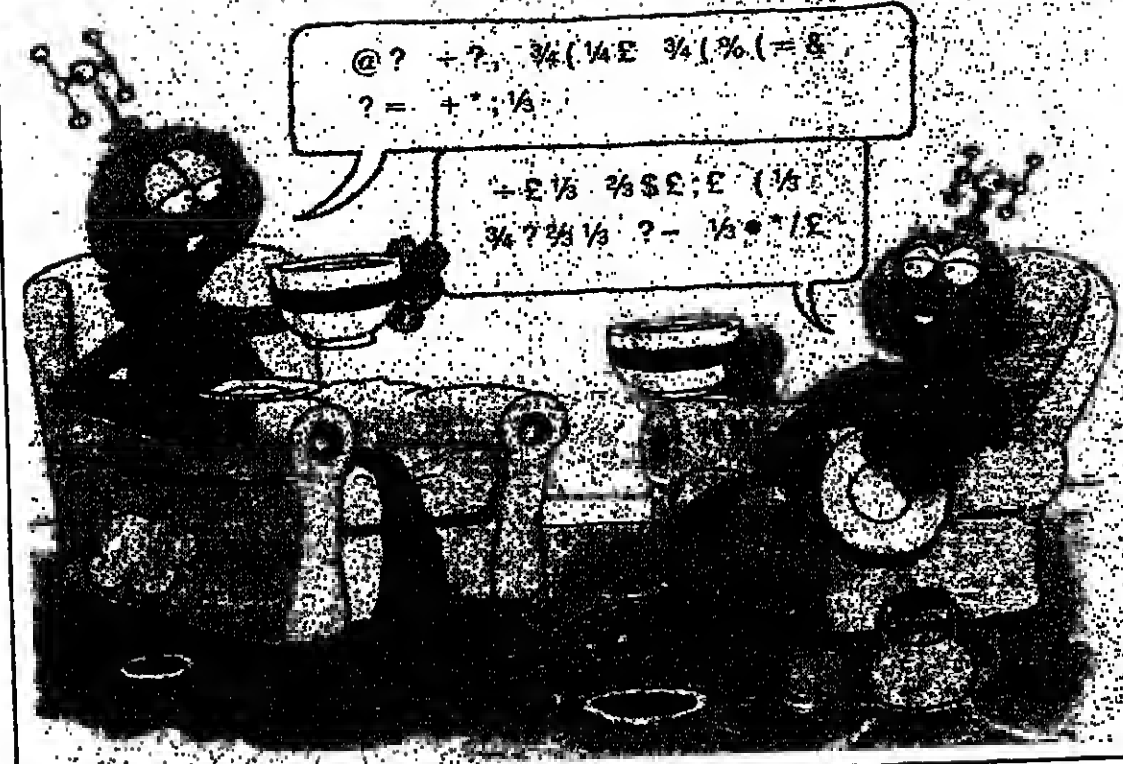
Crack the code

These Morions talk like typewriters! Using the code below, can you work out what they are saying?

A = . B = / C = @ D = % E = & F = * G = \$ H = ^ I = ~ J = - K = + L = = M = > N = < O = ? P = ~ Q = ~ R = ~ S = ~ T = ~ U = ~ V = ~ W = ~ X = ~ Y = ~ Z = ~

WHY DID THE MORION NEED A HANDKERCHIEF?

BECAUSE HE HAD A CODE IN THE DOSE!



Amazing facts

William III, Queen Anne, George I, George II, and George IV all died on Saturdays.

The average summer temperature of the Red Sea is 35 C.

In 1785 Louis XVI issued a decree that all handkerchiefs must be square.

A dragonfly has been known to eat forty house-flies in less than two hours.

Many perfumes are compounded of a substance produced in the glands of the civet, a cat-like animal found in Ethiopia.

Playing

Match the pictures to the words.



sandpit
marbles
bicycle
climbing frame
rocking horse
seesaw



Read the words.

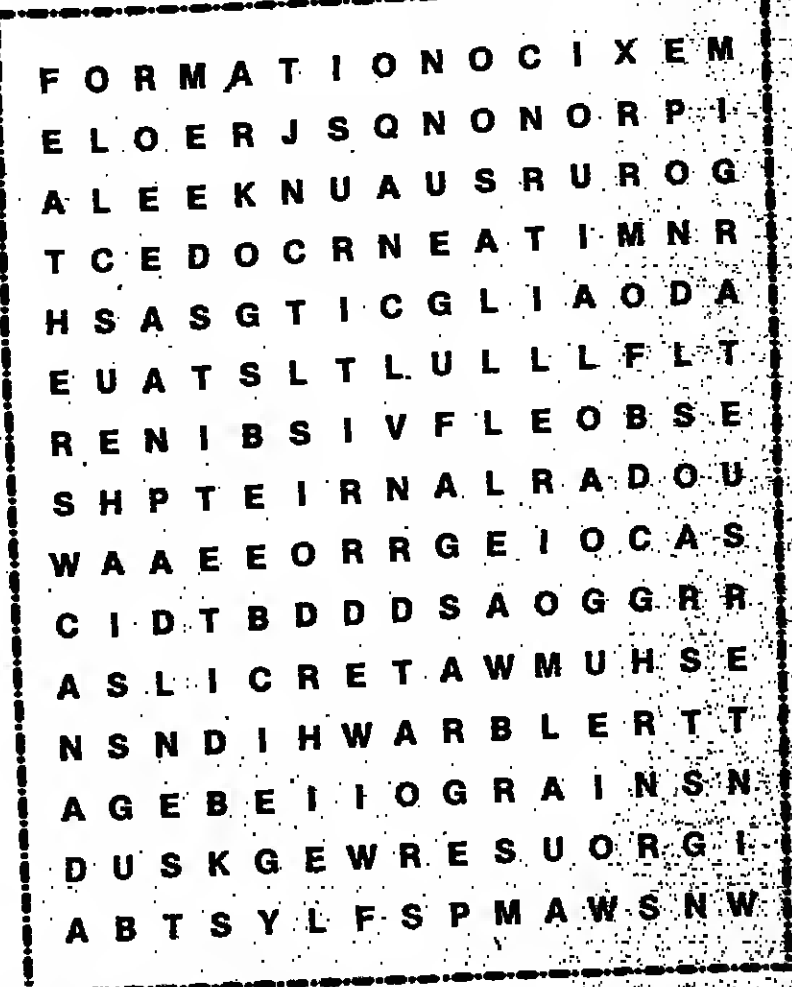
Draw the pictures.

spade	skipping rope	bucket
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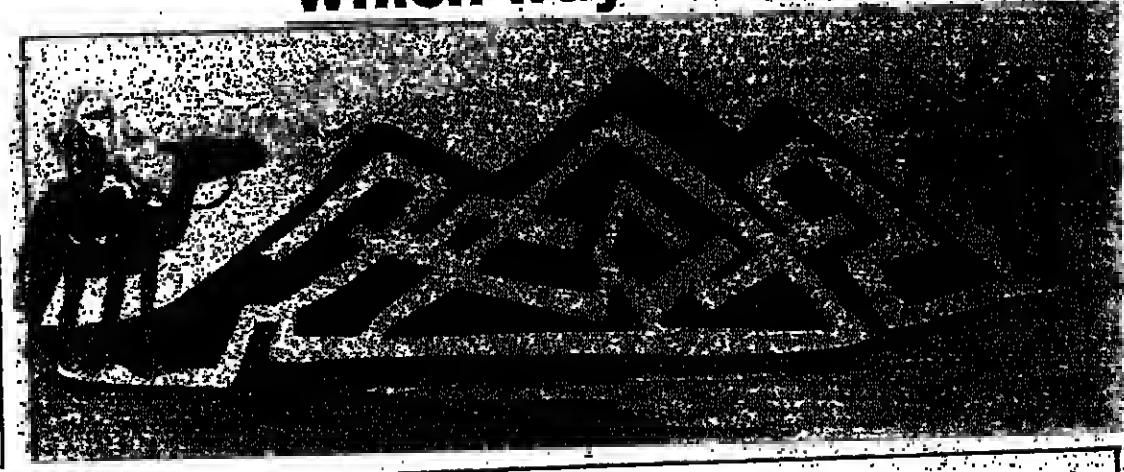
Wordsearch ON THE WING

"Dost thou not perceive that all creatures both in Heaven and earth prize God, and the birds also, extending their wings?"
The Koran, XXIV, c. 625

ACRE	GRAINS	MEXICO	QUAIL	TWIGS
BIRD	GROUSE	MIGRATE	ROBIN	VULTURE
BUGS	HATCH	MOLT	SEASONS	WARBLER
CANADA	HUNTED	NEST	SEEDS	WATER
CAPISTRANO	INSECTS	ORIOLE	SOAR	WILD
CATBIRD	JUNGLE	OWL	SWAMPS	WINTER
CHIRP	MALLARD	POND	TREES	WOODS



Which way home



Draw a bird in the nest.



Birthday coupon

Is your birthday to come soon?
Are you a regular reader of the Junior Times?
Well, now is the chance to let your friends know that it is your birthday!
Or maybe you would like to surprise your best friend, brother or sister by putting their picture in for them.
The details we need are:

Name: _____
Date of birth: _____
School: _____
Telephone: _____
(confidential)

Your favourite most recent picture (4x6)

Send to:
ARAB TIMES
Junior Times
P.O. Box 2270
13023, Safat,
Kuwait
To avoid delayed greetings please send within a week before the special date

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Slight dip in Sabic profits

NICOSIA, March 26, (Reuters): The Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (Sabic) reported a 3.37 billion riyals (\$900 million) net profit in 1989, slightly down on the previous year.

Sabic made a record profit of 3.68 billion riyals (\$980 million) in 1988, a 216 per cent rise on 1987's net income.

Saudi Industry and Electricity Minister Abdullah Al Zamil said Sabic marketed a total of 9.379 million tonnes of goods ranging from fertilisers to steel in 1989, eight per cent up on the previous year.

The official Saudi Press Agency today quoted Zamil as saying that Sabic, Saudi Arabia's giant industrial conglomerate, produced 9.458 million tonnes of steel, petrochemicals, plastics and fertiliser in 1989, a 2.4 per cent rise on 1988.

Zamil, who is managing director of Sabic, said revenue was 13.626 billion riyals (\$3.63 billion) in 1989, compared to 9.322 billion riyals (\$2.49 billion) in 1988.

He said Sabic's board of directors approved a 500 million riyal dividend payout to shareholders, unchanged from last year.

Sabic last week signed an agreement with Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding Company of Japan to construct a new plant at the Arabian Petrochemical Company (Petrokemya), a wholly-owned affiliate in the industrial city of Jubail.

Ibrahim Bin Abdullah Bin Salameh, deputy managing director of Sabic, told SPA yesterday the new plant would produce 500,000 tonnes a year of ethylene, 300,000 tonnes of propylene, 100,000 tonnes of butadiene and 70,000 tonnes of benzene.

Salameh said the project would be completed within 33 months and was expected to come on stream in 1993.

He did not give the cost of the contract but said it would cover all aspects of the project including engineering, detailed design, construction and purchasing services.

Bank shares oversubscribed

WARSAW, March 26, (Reuters): A small bank called Big, the first Polish state-run financial institution to be privatised, announced today its initial public offer of shares was just over 1-1/2 times oversubscribed.

Big S.A. — Bank Inicjatyw Gospodarczych — said in a statement carried by the official Pap News Agency that private investors placed orders for 22,857 shares when only 15,000 were on offer.

After shares are sold to subscribers, the bank's nominal capital will grow to 2.5 billion zloties (263,000) from one billion zloties (\$105,000). The bank plans to issue another 15,000 shares soon.

Big, which was 99 per cent owned by state companies before it went public, became the trailblazer in an ambitious privatisation programme aimed at injecting competition into Poland's economy.

It said foreign investors applied for 9,012 shares but, under regulations imposed by the National Bank, they would be allowed to buy only up to 20 per cent of the issue or 3,000 shares.

The nominal value of a share is 100,000 zloties (\$10.50) and the bank will sell them for 600,000 zloties (\$63).

As Poland currently has no stock exchange, Big said it would provide facilities for investors to trade the shares freely.

MONTH'S MIND

In ever-loving memory of



MINGUEL JOSE D'SILVA

Requiem mass offered for Michael (tailor) at Holy Family Church, Kuwait at 5 pm on 27.3.90. Offered by wife Cecilia, and children Judas, Georgina, Anita and Severina.

Gold plunges and yen weakens

LONDON, March 26, (Reuters): The price of gold plunged more than \$20 an ounce today in a European market made jittery by rumours that a Middle Eastern country had sold a large amount of bullion to buy British pounds, traders said.

They said the rumour hit the gold market early and touched off selling which carried on throughout Europe's trading day.

"It looks like they (the Middle East country) sold gold and then picked up the sterling they wanted in the foreign exchange market," said one currency trader in London.

Analyst Fahd Fathi at traders Prescott Ball and Turben Inc in New York

said the rumoured Middle Eastern seller was Saudi Arabia and that the amounts speculated to have been sold were "anywhere from two million ounces and higher." But he added that none of the rumours could be substantiated.

Shares in gold mining companies were stock market losers in Johannesburg, London and New York.

On foreign exchange markets the Japanese yen, weakened this year by relatively low domestic interest rates and concern about inflationary pressures, fell further against the dollar.

A surge in Japanese shares prices today filtered through to most other major bourses. London's FTSE index

of 100 leading shares closed 14.3 points up at 2,298.2, but off the day's high of 2,306.9.

French and West German shares were also higher by the close and on Wall Street by midday the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 16.44 points up at 2,720.72.

In Tokyo, the 225-share Nikkei average had soared 1,468.33 points or 4.83 per cent to 31,840.49 in its second largest one-day point gain on record.

It was a welcome contrast to the market's dramatic 6.88 per cent tumble last week alone and a 23.31 per cent fall between its all-time peak last 29 and last Thursday when it hit a 1989-90 low.

But share analysts cautioned that the relief could be short-lived as selling pressure from institutional and individual investors hit with crippling losses in the recent slump could easily drag share prices down for a month or two.

After the euphoria over the Tokyo market, gold bullion shot sharply into focus.

It opened in London virtually unchanged from Friday's close of \$389.25 an ounce but within minutes was sinking — to 379.25 by the 1030 GMT fixing and 370.25 at the afternoon setting. It finally closed at \$367.75, down \$21.50 on the day and its lowest finish in London since last

October 24.

Dealers said that in addition to the Middle East seller rumour, other factors causing the slump in gold were the strong dollar — gold is denominated in the US currency — and the perception that investors were buying dollars as a safe haven instead of gold, the traditional resort in times of uncertainty.

In the past, uncertainty such as that created by events in Lithuania might have prompted a rush into gold. "This is another example of gold losing its attractiveness as a safe haven," one analyst in London said.

On the technical side, Stephen Raphael of London traders Brian Mar-

ber and Co said: "The target is now \$375 to \$355 ... at one point gold will rally, but it is unlikely to go above \$402.10, and in the end it will go down and test \$355."

Gold touched \$424 an ounce in early February and was last down as low as \$355 last September — at the time the lowest since July 1986.

The dollar closed in London at 1.7159 West German marks and 156.30 yen after 1.7095 and 153.30 on Friday. But the British pound firmed to 1.6135 from \$1.6045, helped by the large reported sterling order from the Middle East, which traders put at around £500 million.

KPC to finance new petrochemical complex

Kuwait likely to pull out of more Arab organisations

ABUDHABI, March 26, (Agencies): Kuwait is considering pulling out of other Arab organisations which are failing due to lack of financial support from members, a Kuwaiti minister was quoted today as saying.

"Kuwait is spearheading a drive to revise the performance of joint Arab organisations which have problems and fail to realise their objectives," Finance Minister Jassim Mohammed Al-Khorafi told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) newspaper Al Itihad.

Kuwait said last week it would quit the 13-nation Arab Economic Unity Council, citing financial problems within the Amman-based group and saying that it should be disbanded.

"Kuwait has made a decision to stop subscribing to any Arab institution if 60 per cent of the members fail to pay their dues," he was quoted as saying.

"The emergence of deficits in Gulf states balance of payments has made them aware of the burden of their financial contributions to Arab groups," Khorafi told the paper.

Gulf Arab oil producers have been the main financial supporters of such groups. Kuwait has been generous in the past but now has outstanding dues of \$1.5 million to the Amman-based organisation.

The statement specifically complained about overlapping objectives and low representation of member states between the council, which only 13 League member states joined since its founding in 1964, and the League's long-standing Economic and Social Council which includes all 22 members.

He also complained about the poor performance of the body, the failure of most of the member states to meet their financial

commitments, and overmanaging.

In his statements to Al Itihad, the minister said:

"Kuwait is spearheading a campaign to evaluate performance of the joint Arab organisations facing problems and obstacles and not achieving objectives."

"The campaign is aimed at keeping pace with the shortage in financial resources of Gulf oil countries which failed to pay their financial commitments to these organisations," he added.

For its part, he said Kuwait has decided to stop payment of its contributions of any Arab organisation when 60 per cent of the participating states failed to pay their own contributions.

Various League bodies have headquarters spread through Arab capitals and present Arab nationals with higher-paying jobs, all financed by the League

member states in ratios that saw the oil-rich countries like Kuwait bearing a bigger share than others.

Dwindling revenues have stopped most contributions. One hundred employees of five defunct organisations have gone unpaid for months and are now owed accumulated fees of \$6 million.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) will finance from its own resources a \$2 billion petrochemical complex approved by the Gulf state's planners on Saturday, a KPC official said.

"We will not use foreign finance, but internal means. The corporation will finance the whole project," the official told Reuters today.

The project is expected to be open to foreign bidders but KPC has not yet set a date for a tender.

EEC warns Greece

Drastic measures needed to mend economy

ATHENS, March 26, (Reuters): The European Economic Community has told Greece to take drastic and immediate measures to mend its ailing economy or risk losing international credibility.

The message, the most severe warning so far by Greece's EEC partners, was contained in a letter from EEC Commission president Jacques Delors to Prime Minister Xenophon Zolotas on March 5.

It was made public today by conservative party leader Constantine Mitsotakis, who is campaigning in national elections set for April 8, the third in 10 months.

Delors said Greece's economic problems had worsened significantly since 1988 and "the situation in your country is a serious cause of concern for all."

"The most important economic indicators available as well as information gathered by the recent commission delegation in Athens indeed show the situation has become very worrying."

Delors said the EEC had made every effort to help to integrate Greece into the community since it joined in 1981, citing a decision to grant Athens a 1.5 billion ECU (\$1.7 billion) loan in 1985 during a previous economic crisis.

"The commission would find itself in a difficult position to have participated in and linked its credibility to a loan, the terms of which were not met by the borrower," he said.

"This makes immediate and drastic measures imperative, and forming and imposing a multi-year plan to improve the economy as fast as possible."

If Athens failed to take such steps, he said, its huge

debts were "in danger of hurting the credibility of Greece."

Greece's total public debt is estimated at \$54 billion or more than its yearly gross domestic product.

Delors also said significant economic differences between Athens and its EEC partners threatened to undermine Greece's future as the EEC moved towards a single integrated market in 1992 and economic and monetary union.

He noted that Greece's 15 per cent inflation rate was three times the EEC average, wages were rising at 30 per cent a year and public borrowing had increased "massively" in two years.

Greece's economic woes, rooted in huge and growing public debts, have been aggravated by the political crisis which has paralyzed the country over the past year.

Since the defeat of the Socialist Party in June after eight years in power, Greece has been ruled by two weak coalition governments. Major problems have been pushed aside while the main political parties jockeyed for position.

Mitsotakis' New Democracy Party emerged as the largest group in elections in June and November but failed both times to win an absolute majority in the 300-seat parliament.

The April election looks like a re-run with the socialists, conservatives and communists again going into post-election bargaining to try to find a workable coalition — which would mean further delays in dealing with Greece's economic woes.

Iran lowers oil pricing for Japan

Exports jump

NICOSIA, March 26, (Reuters): Iran has agreed to lower its second quarter price formula for liftings of heavy crude for Japanese customers by 30 cents, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said today.

The Nicosia-based newsletter said the National Iranian Oil Co. and Japan's Showa-Shell agreed last week that the new price formula for Iranian heavy crude would be spot Dubai minus 45 cents. The first quarter price was spot Dubai minus 15 cents.

The price formula for Iranian light would remain unchanged at parity with spot Oman.

MEES said it was assumed the arrangement would cover all Japanese term buyers of Iranian oil.

Volumes for end-users were expected to remain at quarter levels of 95,000 barrels per day (bpd) but trading houses would probably have to reduce liftings of 195,000 bpd due to difficulties in placing Iranian heavy, the

newsletter said. Iran's crude oil production averaged 2.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in February, around 340,000 bpd below its current Opec sales quota, the MEES said today.

The Nicosia-based newsletter said Iranian crude exports jumped to 2.05 million bpd from 1.75 million in January, due mainly to a 231,000 bpd rise in liftings of Iranian heavy crude.

A Reuters survey at the end of February put Iranian output for the month at 2.7 million bpd but industry sources said the estimate had to be regarded as provisional due to problems in making an early assessment.

Iran's current Opec sales quota is 3.14 million bpd but industry sources say the country is having difficulty selling its less-prized heavy "sour" grades of crude.

MEES quoted Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Azadeh as saying Iran was holding talks

with international companies aimed at contracting them to join oil and gas development projects but this would not include equity or production sharing agreements.

"We are at present talking with a lot of companies regarding the development of gas reservoirs, and oil reservoirs also. I think that during this year we will have a lot of these development contracts with foreign companies," Azadeh said.

"But this would not be under any kind of equity or production sharing arrangements. The companies would develop these reservoirs, and be paid from the production of these or other reservoirs," he said.

Azadeh told MEES the emphasis for development was more on gas than oil. Iran's offshore Pars gas field in the Gulf and heavy oil reserves in the Mond field were specific candidates, he said. There were no further details.



Lincoln Town Car

Overwhelming reception

KUWAIT car buyers have given the 1990 Lincoln Town Car an overwhelming reception — with consignments of the luxury car selling as quickly as they arrive in the country.

"It is the most eagerly-awaited car we have ever been involved with," says Peter Benham, sales and marketing manager of Arabian Motors Group.

"The reaction has been better than we anticipated. We sold our first consignment virtually off the ship and have had to order extra supplies from Ford to meet the demand."

"One customer was so eager he took our showroom Town Car straight off the showroom floor!"

The sleek Town Car, with new aerodynamic

design, improved luxury features, and an all new interior, (with air-bag restraint systems for both driver and passenger) was recently voted the 1990 Car of the Year by the influential American magazine "Motor Trend".

The Town Car was exclusively previewed to the GCC by Arabian Motors Group (AMG) at the Kuwait Motor Show last November. It leads the line-up of the new Ford, Lincoln and Mercury models for 1990 which, for the first time, feature standard driver side air-bags on most of the cars available in Kuwait: Ford Crown Victoria, Mustang and Taurus, Mercury Grand Marquis and Sable as well as the Lincoln Town Car, Continental and Mark VII.

The GEARED way to invest in EUROPE

Europe has a number of features which make it an outstanding opportunity for investors — the completion of a European Single Market in 1992 leading to increased merger and acquisition activity, political and economic reform in Eastern Europe, and an attractive valuation of financial assets. The large size of the European equity warrant markets and the attractive premium rating of equity warrants could make this a most exciting form of investment.

The gearing inherent in warrants will increase the risk and potential reward to investors in the Fund, we therefore recommend that investors do not expose more than 1-2% of their total portfolio to the European Warrant Fund.

MINIMUM INVESTMENT — U.S.\$5,000

The Fund is denominated in U.S. dollars and was launched on 12th February 1990 at U.S.\$5.00 per share. Investment can be accepted in any freely convertible currency through the Currency Conversion Service.

It should be noted that past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of shares can fall as well as rise. Investors may not get back the amount originally invested.

The Fund has an initial charge of 6% and annual charges of 2.675%.

The Fund is an open-ended investment company (SICAV), based in Luxembourg and its shares are listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange.

Registered Office: 14, Rue Aldringen, Luxembourg — R.C., Luxembourg B24400.

MIM BRITANNIA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

MIM Britannia International Limited is the General Portfolio Manager and has been appointed distributor of the Fund having received a permit to act as functionary to the Fund under the Collective Investment Funds (Jersey) Law 1988.

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BUSINESS

Land speculation threatens S. Korean financial reform

SEOUL, March 26, (Reuters): Speculation in the red-hot real estate market will force South Korea to scrap a major part of its ambitious financial reform plan, economists and bankers say.

Anxious to crack down on tax evasion and other shady activities, Seoul has said it will force everyone to conduct financial transactions under their real names from 1991.

But the threat of the real-name reform has failed to spark massive capital flight from the stock market into real estate, fueling a land price

boom that many people believe will deter the government from carrying out the reform.

"I don't think the government will be able to implement the real-name system unless it gets runaway land prices under control," said Kim Tae-Won, head of Coryo Research Institute.

Currently, financial market speculators open many accounts in banks and securities houses under false names or the names of relatives and friends to hide wealth.

The real-name reform would aim to

end this practice, and to prevent bank branches from serving as go-betweens for private moneylenders who carry out their own multi-billion-dollar loan business in the clandestine "Kerb market."

Brokers and analysts report capital flight of some five trillion won (\$7 billion) from the Seoul Stock Exchange since the government began preparing to implement the real-name reform a year ago.

They say the money has been diverted into the lucrative real estate market. The average land price in

South Korea jumped 32 per cent in 1989, the construction ministry said. Prices for houses have doubled in many areas of Seoul in the past year.

Kim Tae-Dong, an economics professor at Songkyunkwan University, said capital gains through rises in real estate value were an estimated 85 trillion won (\$121 billion) in 1989, over 70 per cent of South Korea's gross national product.

Businessmen criticise the real-name reform on the grounds that an outflow of capital from the financial markets would damage the economy, and the

land price boom is blamed for much of South Korea's economic difficulties. "Speculative activities in real estate are blamed for inflation, declining investment in manufacturing industries and a slump in the stock exchange," Kim Tae-Won said.

Some factory owners privately say they now build factories not to expand manufacturing operations but to take easy profits through speculation in land.

Facing an economic slowdown, with GNP growth dropping to 6.5 per cent last year from 12.2 per cent in

1988, policy makers are apparently bowing to pressure from businessmen.

Recent reports in the local news media, apparently leaked by top economic officials, have indicated that the reform will be scrapped or postponed indefinitely.

"Even before the new system is implemented, it is causing lots of problems: Promised policies should be amended if situations change drastically," newly appointed Economic Planning Minister Lee Seung-Yun told reporters recently.

Finance Minister Chung Yung-Euy

said: "The new system must be beneficial to the economy. If it isn't, the issue of whether or not it should be carried out must be reconsidered."

In another indication of a policy change, President Roh Tae-Woo's month-sacked reform-minded economic ministers in a cabinet reshuffle and replaced them with Lee, Chung and Trade Minister Park Pil-Son.

"We welcome the apparent policy change because the real-name system should have further distorted the already difficult economic environment," an American banker said.

Economic miracle founders

ABIDJAN, March 26, (Reuters): When workers in the Ivory Coast look at their pay slips this month they will discover what the country's farmers already know — black Africa's economic miracle is over.

The West African country that dined on champagne and French oysters during the commodity boom years of the 1970s is now scrambling to find enough money to pay its civil servants.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and foreign donors have made salary cuts and drastic deflation a condition for lending more money to the country.

The cuts have sparked the biggest protests of President Felix Houphouët-Boigny's 30-year rule and unprecedented demands for multi-party democracy.

Fired by the demise of Eastern Europe's autocrats, striking students dared for the first time to call on Houphouët-Boigny to quit. He put his French-trained troops on the streets to quell unrest and closed schools and the university.

The protesters blamed mismanagement and corruption for much of the economic mess and said the rich should pay.

Clearly rattled by the depth of opposition and possibility of strikes, the government quickly cobbled together a package of relief measures such as lower rent and cheaper basic foods which it said would compensate for the pay cuts.

Few Ivorians believe such government assurances, and grassroots opposition from within the government-controlled trade unions is growing, according to union sources.

"The government is improvising," said a senior foreign adviser who asked not to be identified. "They announce one set of measures and then a set of counter-measures as soon as there is any opposition. The result is the sums do not add up and we do not know where we stand."

"The country is headed for economic disaster," he said. "It will take massive foreign assistance to pull them out of it and even then that aid will have to be better managed than in the past to be effective."

Houphouët-Boigny, Africa's longest-serving leader, blames the crisis on a 55 per cent drop in cocoa prices and a 48 per cent fall in coffee prices between 1986 and 1989. Ivory Coast is the world's biggest cocoa and fourth biggest coffee producer.

During the boom years the state had lots of cash, some of which was used to create a road network and basic infrastructure which is still the envy of many dirt-poor sub-Saharan states.

Ivorians took white-collar jobs in air-conditioned offices and some three million immigrants from nearby countries did the heavy, dirt work. The numbers of French actually grew after independence in 1960 and they dominated management and service industries while the Lebanese prospered in commerce.

In 1985 coffee and cocoa receipts were \$1.5 billion but by 1988 they had halved to \$776 million and are still falling.

North Korea predicts 40 pc tourism growth

TOKYO, March 26, (AP): North Korea said today it expects 40 per cent more foreign tourists this year, but did not say how many visited last year.

The official Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo, also said the number of foreign tourists visiting North Korea had increased by 50 per cent over the last four years.

Tourism has become animated with the consolidation of the economic foundation of the country, the development of the scenic spots and discovery of historical relics and remains," it said.

Several travel agents in Hong Kong offer tours to North Korea, although they report that earlier this month, Americans were banned from such tours, the reason was not known.

One agent said his company began operating twice-monthly tours to North Korea in September 1988, with 25-30 people in each group.

Indian rupee 17.240
Sri Lanka rupee 7.450
Pakistan rupee 13.900
Bangladesh taka 8.650
US dollar 25.520
Pound sterling 47.725
Yen 0.0834
Deutsche mark 17.200
Japanese yen 0.01895

Bid to develop new gas, oil wells

Iran, Iraq seek overseas help

NICOSIA, Cyprus, March 26, (AP): Iran and Iraq are both seeking the help of foreign companies to help develop their gas and oil resources, the Middle East Economic Survey reported today.

Iran's President, Hashemi Rafsanjani, has been advocating foreign help to rebuild and develop the country's economy after the eight-year Gulf war.

Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh told the weekly newsletter in an interview: "We are at present talking with a lot of companies regarding the development of gas reservoirs, and oil reservoirs also."

But Aqazadeh stressed any such project would "not be under any kind of equity or production-sharing arrangements. The companies would develop these reservoirs, and be paid from the production of these or other

reservoirs."

"A lot of companies have started discussions with us, and the prospects for this programme are good," he said. "I think that during this year we will have a lot of these development contracts with foreign companies."

Aqazadeh said the fields in question were known to contain oil and gas but had not yet been developed. He specifically mentioned part of the Pars gas field in the Gulf.

The newsletter quoted him as saying the emphasis was less on oil than on gas, of which Iran has reserves of 17 trillion cubic metres, the second largest in the world after the Soviet Union.

Aqazadeh put Iran's current sustainable production capacity at 3.3 million barrels a day, set to rise to 3.7 million barrels a day in four months' time and 4 million barrels a day next year.

He was quoted as saying he

expected capacity to expand to around 5 million barrels a day within five years.

In a separate interview, Iraqi Oil Minister Issam Abdul-Rahim Al Chalabi told the Nicosia-based newsletter that Iraq aimed to increase its production capacity through its new oilfield development programme.

The oil minister said the programme would encompass both light and heavy crude oil, including, "hopefully," the Yamama formation which contains light crude but at a depth of more than 3,000 metres (10,000 feet).

The new programme entails inviting foreign companies to develop new oilfields in Iraq that are already discovered and appraised but as yet undeveloped, the newsletter said.

Al Chalabi said the response has been positive.



Hamad A. Abdul Latif Al Hamad distributes medals and service recognition certificates.

Long serving employees honoured

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait held a service recognition party at the Grand Ballroom of the Kuwait International Hotel on 24.3.1990 in honour of the employees who served the bank for 25, 20, 15 and 10 years.

Dalal Al Ghanim, assistant general manager, marketing division welcomed the chairman Hamad A.A. Al Hamad and the long serving employees to the function. Al Ghanim thanked the board of directors on behalf of the employees of the bank for holding such a function and distributing awards which symbolises the board's appreciation of the staff's loyalty and hard work.

Al Hamad in his speech appreciated the distinguished services offered by these staff members. He distributed medals and certificates to 126 staff members.

Here is the list of names of employees who were honoured at the function on the basis of length of their service period:

Completion of 25 years of service: Mahmoud Issa Barhoum.
Completion of 20 years of service: George R. Sequeira, Javadi Ahmad Sheikh, Abdullah Saleh Alawi, Kavalor R. Prasad, Ziad Masoud Karaman, Mohamed Abdulla Maqsood, Juma Matar Al Zeer, Mohamed Hussein Mawafi, Adif Sa'ed Nasrallah, Fakhriya N. Nuseibeh, Mahmoud A.R. Hassan, Kurien Varghese, Hikmat Ali Naser, Hilda Muna Arafah, Yousef Abdulatif Al Assoussi, Yash Kumar Sehgal, Saleh Hassan Amawi, Shafique Al Shuaili, Sami Sulaiman Juma, Sulaiman M. Al Maitthan, Elveera Fernandes, Abdulla Ahmed Al Hadrami, Juma A. Sawad, Magda Hassan Darweesh, Anouette Anton, Eyad Dekran, Mohamed Yahya Abdul Rahman and Michael Gonsalves.

Completion of 15 years of service: Vijay Kumar Bali, Sa'ed Mohamed Sebi, Sultan M. Masoud, Said A. Hamid Kasheer, Elias Santimano, Jennifer Sharma, Antonina Fernandes, Mullaserry S. John, Chandy Math-

cwa, Baptist D'Souza, Raja S. Hassan, Murtaza G. Kermalli, Laila Al Majed, K.P. Saniharan, David Nicolas Bacha, Baby Jose, Lily Ida Meneses, Ibrahim A. Abdulla, Sayed H. Sayed Ibrahim, Sultan Naief Abu Salem, Salim Ahmed-Baharra, Abdulla Zaki Ahmad and Saubhalla Rizk Sarouphim.

Completion of 10 years of service: William G. Cordeiro, Nahla Hussein Ajaah, Maria Jane Noronha, Ana Pedrine Vaz, Rosalind P. D'Souza, Adel Abdel Yazeen, Maria Anita Fernandes, John M.P. George, Pyaro Pir Sayyed, S. Radhakrishnan Nair, Mary Antoinette Dagher, Graciosa Pereira, Jehan Metwally, John Mathew, Abdul Ghani Al Jabi, Zainuddin A. Alwari, Abdul Karim Sangameshwar, Hamad Yahya Al Yahya, Sabu T. George, Philip Nary Meneses, Jaquim Esteves, N.E. Varghese, Jose M.A. Rodriguez, Ravi Varghese Antonio G.F. Pereira, Azmi Sulvan O. Sulvan, Juedi Abdel M. Juedi, Thomas S. D'Souza, Shaikh Ali Burgiba, Jose Alias D'Silva, Jose Fernandes, Adnan Issa Al Mattar, Waleed S. Al Waheeb, Amal A. Rahim Abdul Karim, Salima Farhan Al Thubaini, Ali J. Abdullah, Kavath R.K. Ramamunni, Raju. George Mathew, Dheya Sulaiman Al Saue, Nadia W. Agnew, Ignacia Fernandes, Hungarouza Abdul Munaf, Adnan Essa Al Jark, Abdul Majied Murad, Ashkanani, Rachel P. Chandi, Corazon V. Paris, Thureya Ali Ghiloum, Walter G. D'Souza, Elizabeth Abraham, Shamshad Begumwala, Fawzia Abdulla Al Bassam, Saad Helmi Abu Al Soud, Muna Abdul Fatah Naser Al Deen, George Alexander, Lawabeth S. Mubarak, Mohamed Sager, Meena Berry, Edakandiyil Abdulla, Mohamed Rafiq Malik, P.B. Kumar, Aliw A. Al Dewalla, Asrar Ibrahim Abasi, Raghu A.R. Hussein Al Owaid, Kamble L. Narsing, Mohan Philip Thomas, Abdul Rashied Tufail, Mahmood Karam Ali, Muna Essa Al Humayyan, Ahmed Abdul Karim, Agnes Amal Bhavani, Nuba Izzat Issa, Nally Bahu Rao and Insaaf Hassan Ibrahim.

Japan suggests

Americans cut credit card use

TOKYO, March 26, (UPI): Japan, in a letter to US trade negotiators, said the US government should limit the number of credit cards one person can own, increase the gasoline tax, impose a federal sales tax and do away with the income tax deduction on housing loans, a leading newspaper reported today.

The letter written by the Japanese government listed 80 steps the United States could take to improve its economy, cut spending, increase savings and help reduce the trade deficit, according to the Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan's largest daily newspaper, which obtained a copy of the letter.

Japanese officials refused to confirm details of the letter but said it was part of the ongoing US-Japanese trade talks aimed at identifying the causes of America's trade deficit with Japan, which has been stuck at around \$50 billion a year for several years.

"In the process of negotiation, both parties have proposed various ideas for structural improvements, but in concrete terms, we are not going to make any comment," said a Foreign Ministry official.

The United States has drawn up its own list of more than 200 proposals on how Japan can reform

its economy to make it more open to US imports, according to a report last week in another newspaper, the Asahi Shimbun.

The Americans suggested Japan take steps to increase public works spending, break up business monopolies, bring down land prices and streamline the process for opening retail stores.

Japan's suggestions to the United States, according to the newspaper, included:

- Limit the number of credit cards one person can own to reduce consumer spending.
- Abolish the income tax deduction on housing loans, which the Japanese say encourages spending not savings.
- Construct a network of high-speed public railways to reduce energy consumption.
- Enact a federal value added tax, a sales tax paid by manufacturers and merchants, to help reduce the budget deficit.
- Increase the federal gasoline tax.
- Amend the Gramm-Rudmann deficit reduction act so that any year the budget reduction target is not met, 120 per cent of the portion not met must be trimmed from the next year's budget.

Harsh measures to guarantee success

SAO PAULO, Brazil, March 26, (Reuters): Brazilian authorities made their drastic new monetary and fiscal reform especially harsh to guarantee success, Central Bank president Ibrahim Eris said in an interview published over the weekend.

Eris predicted that Brazil, which had raised inflation of 1,765 per cent last year, "shortly would be heading towards inflation comparable to developed nations — something like five or six per cent a year."

Brazil had 73 per cent inflation in February.

"We had to give a shock which would have guaranteed success — this was the only method we thought about," said Eris, who became central bank president on March 15 under the incoming administration of Fernando Collor de Mello.

Eris, a Turkish-born naturalised Brazilian, gave the interview to Veja, Brazil's most important newsweekly.

Collor announced a Draconian economic programme on March 16 that froze most bank account deposits for 18 months — a measure that some people have called confiscation.

"To encircle inflation on all sides, we established an extremely strong monetary and fiscal control, which in theory is enough to bring inflation to zero. For security, we also controlled prices," Eris said.



Money dealers signal trading indications at a Tokyo brokerage company as the dollar rose to 156,000 yen despite central bank intervention early yesterday, the first time it had touched such a level in Tokyo in over three years. The dollar was 156.27 at midday after closing in New York at 154.31. (Reuters wirephoto)

Tokyo shares sharply higher

TOKYO, March 26, (AP): The Tokyo Stock Exchange's key index soared by nearly 5 per cent today in its second biggest single-day rise ever, even though the US dollar kept gaining against the Japanese yen despite central bank intervention.

The Nikkei stock average of 225 selected issues, which gained 528.82 points last Friday, surged 1,468.33 points, or 4.83 per cent, today, closing at 31,840.49.

The gain was second only to the 2,037.32-point rise on Oct. 21, 1987, when shares prices rebounded from the world-wide "Black Monday" crash.

Last Monday, the index had slid 1,353.20 points at the start of a three-day plunge that took the index below 30,000 before it began rebounding last Friday.

Many investors believed the index had bottomed out last week, when it fell a total of 777.1 points in three days, securities dealers said.

"Shares were broadly bought in anticipation of the actual start of the new fiscal year," said a dealer with Nomura Securities, speaking on condition of anonymity. Japan's fiscal year, formally begins on April 1, but this Monday, new contracts are counted under the new fiscal year.

While share prices rose almost across the board, construction and electric power issues led the gains.

Blue-chip electrical shares, such as Toshiba, Hitachi and Sony, were also big gainers.

Volume traded on the first session of the exchange was estimated at 700 million shares, compared with last Friday's 668.98 million shares.

On the currency market, the dollar closed at 156.40 yen, up 1.33 yen from last Friday's close of 155.07 yen. After opening at 155.65 yen, it ranged between 155.50 yen and 156.40 yen.

Bombay shares

Bombay Stock Exchange prices (Rs)			
	Pr. Close	Open	Close
ACC	398	392	384
Alcon Chem	—	—	—
Alw Nis	—	—	—
Ani Fab	—	—	—
Ashtek Ley	76	76	78
Asia Pict	233.75	238.75	231.25
Atlas Corp	37.50	36	37
Auto Corp	57.50	55	57.50
Nat Index	411.85	414.14	414.14
Bajaj Auto	400	410	395
Bar Rayon	747.50	752.50	732.50
Blow Plast	—	—	—
Bond Dye	100	188	184
BK Bond	113	112.25	111.25
Carbide	87.75	82.50	85
Cashmere	—	—	—
Can Enka	3250	3300	3260
Can Sps	3050	3040	3080
Colgate	230	230	225.50
Cromi Gr	940	900	940
DCM	16.50	15	16
Deep Fert	32.50	32.50	32
Dunlop	57.50	55	57.50
El Holes	63	62	63.50
Egortis	86	87.50	90
BSE Index	757.76	761.33	761.33
Eskayev	143.75	145.25	135
Essar Sps	35	35	35
Food Sps	128	128.75	121.25
Gar Poly	36	37.50	36
Glindia	102	103	99
GNPC	44.25	44	42.50
Gream	122.50	121.50	120
GE Sps	49.50	49.50	49
GSFC	185	185	183.75
ICI	34	35	34
ICI Heavy	16.50	16.25	16.75
Hero Honda	20	19	20
Hind Ciba	1285	1280	1260
Hind Lever	119.50	122.50	118
Hind Cocco	168.75	172.50	163.50
Hindocor	263.75	263.75	263.75
Hoechst	1810	1700	1660
Ingersoll	240	240	240
ITC	64	65	63.50
Ind Org	55	55	55.75
Ind Rayon	102.50	101	99
Indro	211.25	215	200
JK Sps	56	56	58
Kin Eng	142.50	147.50	140
Kir Cumm	82	81	84
KSB Pumps	215	212.50	220
L & T	70	80.50	79.50
Lipson	98.50	101	92
Mace Russel	115	115	117.50
Mad Coats	—	—	105
Malindira	80	78.75	77.50
Mas Share	18.35	18.50	18.50
Mico	880	890	840
Milkfood	230	215	225
Modi	47	45	47
MRF Ltd	215	210	207.50
Muk Iron	138	142	137.50
Nocel	1290	1300	1280
Nat Org	44.50	44.50	45.50
Orkay	16.75	17	17
Oswal Org	—	—	47
Peico	82.50	82.50	83
Pfizer	225	232.50	226
Prest Auto	60	59.50	59
Ranbaxy	—	—	100
Ray Wool	85	84	83.50
Reckitt	220	220	222.50
Reliance	66	69	67
Sena Cos	90	92	86
Shaw Wall	—	—	—
Shen Con	—	—	—
Shri Fib	56	55	57
Siemens	111	114	112
SKF	1405	1390	1380
Spic	60.50	61	59
St Mills	75.50	—	—
Tata Oil	125	124.50	124
Tata Pow	475	475	457.50
Telco	123.50	125	123
Thapp Agro	—	—	—
Tisco	117.25	122.50	120.50
Vam Org	147.50	150	142.50
Vareli	—	—	—
Voltes	72	69	71
Winco	21	21.75	20.75
Zanari	57	56	57
Zuari Agro	62	62	64

Compiled by Kowat-India International Exchange Co.

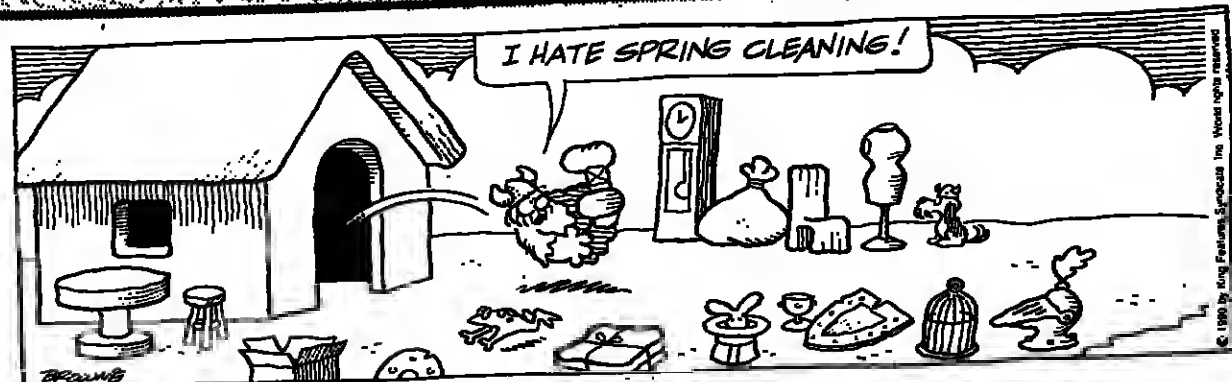
SHIPS DISCHARGING AT SHUWAIKH PORT AS ON 26/3/90			
S.No.	Ship's Name	Agent	Tel. No.
3	Mercs Horana	Alpha Borel	2432988
7	Maritime Peace	Bahsah	2436920
14	Smolens	A. Saeed	2623135
17	Yang Jiang	M. Bahar	2401300
SHIPS EXPECTED AT SHUWAIKH PORT			
ETA	Ship's Name	Agent	Tel. No.
26/03	Taduk	KSA	4843150
27/3	Fremo Scorpian	Agto	4347815
SHIPS DISCHARGING AT SHUWAIBA PORT			
B No	Ship's Name	Agent	Tel. No.
11	Helena Olanoff	KSA	2441880
SHIPS EXPECTED AT SHUWAIBA PORT			
27/3	Haighi	Stamco	2439973
26/3	YS Prosperity	Rashed	2422026
27/3	Al Zawra A	UASC	4843130
27/3	K.L.AI Waleed	UASC	4843150
27/3	Al Hana D	Sayer Shaabon	2432692

LEISURE

BLONDIE — By Dean Young & Stan Drake



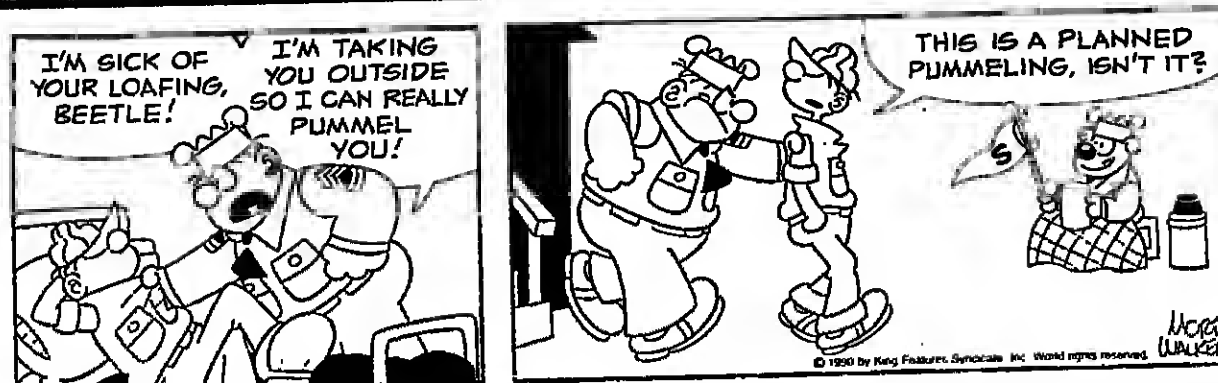
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE — By Dik Browne



AGATHA CRUMM — By Dik Browne



BEETLE BAILEY — By Mort Walker



THE WIZARD OF ID — By Brant Parker & Johnny Hart



ANDY CAPP



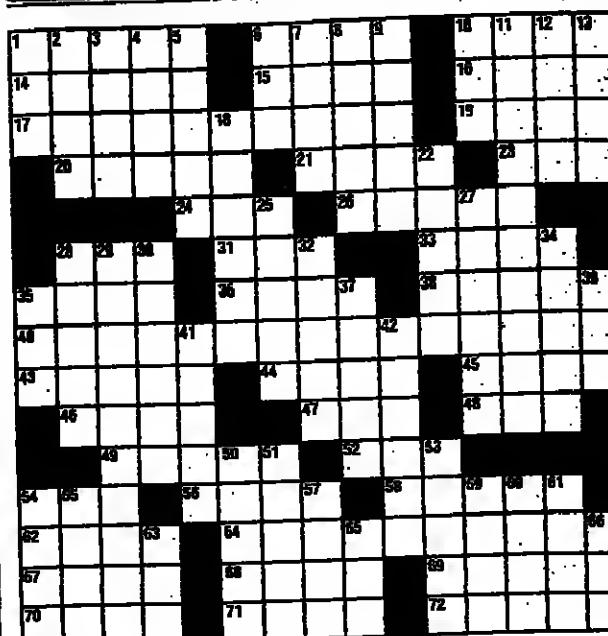
S.C. — By Johnny Hart



HE MAN — By G. F. Jones & J. Smith



TODAY'S CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- 1 Yogi of baseball fame
 - 6 Asian desert
 - 10 Saratoga et al.
 - 14 Ratlike birds
 - 15 Ready for business
 - 16 St. Louis tourist attraction
 - 17 Harry Anderson's TV show
 - 19 Bill of fare
 - 20 Scroll of the Pentateuch
 - 21 Appear
 - 23 Former GI
 - 24 Oil-drilling equipment
 - 26 Exchange
 - 28 Ill. capital
 - 31 "Kingfish" of Louisiana
 - 35 Israeli port
 - 36 Colors
 - 38 Carries
 - 40 The party-is-over song
 - 43 Coin of India
 - 44 Cleveland's lake
 - 45 "— Horizon"
 - 46 Beams
 - 47 Little one: Suffix
 - 48 Wind direction
 - 49 Greet the day
 - 52 Airline: Abbr.
 - 54 Swimsuit part
 - 56 Give the cold shoulder
 - 58 Beaming
 - 62 Home of note
 - 64 Irresponsible one
 - 67 Pass catches
 - 68 Words of comprehension
 - 69 Miscue
 - 70 Powerless
- DOWN
- 1 Gaffer Hogan
 - 2 Give forth
 - 3 — Park, N.Y.
 - 4 German
 - 5 "— to steer her by": Masefield
 - 6 Sticky stuff
 - 7 Major work
 - 8 French topper
 - 9 Link, lock of
 - 10 Symbolic Uncle
 - 11 Part of ASPCA
 - 12 Teen woe
 - 13 Closed
 - 18 Pretentiously elegant
 - 22 Islands S of Sicily
 - 25 Measure
 - 27 Scribble idly
 - 28 Rub with vigor
 - 29 Misinformation,
- of a sort
- 30 A late night flight
 - 32 Indian statesman
 - 34 Take a gander at these?
 - 35 Part of Tex. A.M.
 - 37 Marsh bird
 - 39 Fast plane, for short
 - 41 Aerics
 - 42 Margin for error
 - 50 Not suitable
 - 51 Resonate
 - 53 Choreographer de Mille
 - 54 Puffed
 - 55 French President Cocty
 - 57 Farwellis
 - 59 Italian coins
 - 60 Monster
 - 61 Thump
 - 63 Inquire
 - 65 Keepers of the kitty: Abbr.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

STIRE SASSY OPAL
URAL ARETE NEVA
FANDANCERS TRIO
INTEND ASTOUND
RILIS PLIA
MDPS EER RUBBLE
AHA EGRET GORES
DANCED THE HOURS
AREAL SAINT TOE
MILDEN NEG HEYS
RED FIRE
PRESSER NEARED
LAVA DANCE FLOOR
DMEN ELUDE ETNA
WAND DETER REST

FOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ 7 4

♥ J 10 9 7 5 2

♦ Q

♣ 10 8 5 3

WEST

♠ Q 5

♥ A 6 3

♦ J 7 5 3 2

♣ 9 7 4

EAST

♠ 9

♥ K Q 8 4

♦ A 10 9 6 4

♣ A Q J

SOUTH

♠ A K J 10 8 6 3 2

♥ Void

♦ K 8

♣ K 6 2

The bidding:

South 1 ♠ Pass

West 4 ♠ Pass

North Pass

East Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♣

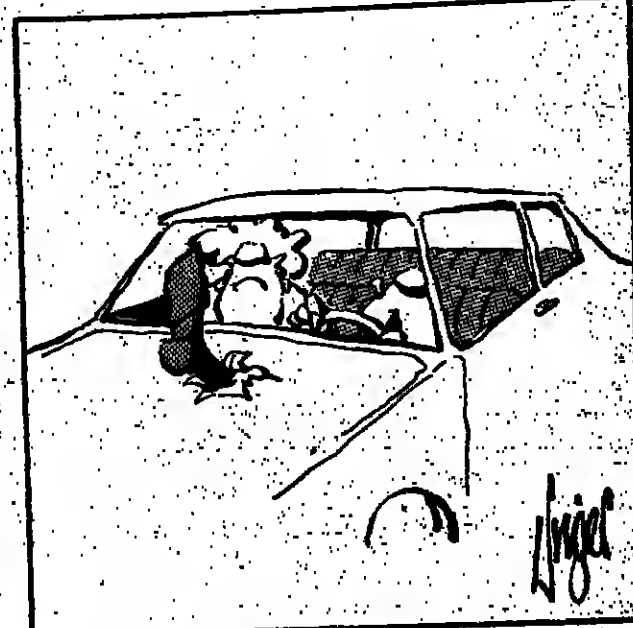
Bridge players get into the habit of ruffing losers. As a result, the benefits of ruffing a winner are sometimes overlooked.

South correctly decided to open one spade rather than a preemptive four spades. After all, as little as the ace of diamonds and queen-jack of clubs in partner's hand could have made slam a laydown. After

North's pass and East's takeout double, however, South was no longer sure whose hand it was and the jump to game was a two-way action—it might make, would not prove expensive if it did not and might keep the opponents out of a makable game.

West led the ace of hearts and declarer went down to defeat quickly. The opening lead was ruffed, trumps were drawn in two rounds and a diamond went to the queen and ace. Declarer ruffed the heart return and tried leading clubs from hand twice in an effort to fetch the ace—down one, losing three clubs and the ace of diamonds.

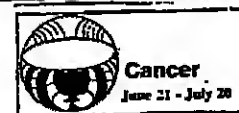
Declarer was in so much of a hurry to draw the enemy fangs that the power of dummy's trumps was overlooked. After ruffing the ace of hearts, declarer should have ignored trumps and led a diamond to the queen and ace. Assume East returns a trump. South wins, leads the king of diamonds and ruffs his own trick in dummy—declarer desperately needs the entry to the table so he can lead a club to his king. When East turns up with the ace, the king of clubs becomes the fulfilling trick.



YOUR STARS



It will be rather hard for you to come to terms with the facts. You will find it easier to persuade others to do what is commonsensical. There is no reason to lose faith in yourself. Be fair.



There is plenty to look forward to but you should not expect to have the world at your feet. Do show just a little more goodwill towards others. You should concentrate on doing what is most urgent first. Be resourceful.



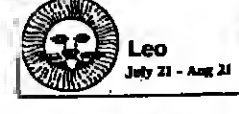
Something you had virtually been relying on will not now happen. Nevertheless there is still a lot to be thankful for. And you will be able to avail yourself of a good opportunity. Be magnanimous.



If you expect others to do exactly what you would like them to you have a disappointed in store. Whilst not exaggerating the difficulties you should not ignore them either. If you do a friend a favour, it will be greatly appreciated. Be meticulous.



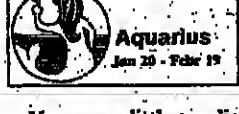
Something you have been trying hard to learn will now become second nature. Take a little more care with your personal appearance. If you just hope for the best you will be sorely disappointed: work towards it. Be sincere.



You will be able to make a few welcome changes. You will be lucky insofar as something that could well have happened to you will not. You will have to make sure that you do not take too much for granted. Be sensible.



There is a greater tendency to make mistakes and you must be on the lookout for them. And the advice about a stitch in time still remains true. You should not allow your likes and dislikes to upset your judgement. Be lenient.



You are a little too liable to get caught up in detail and should try to redirect yourself a little. A good idea will help you to overcome a rather unusual problem. There is still time to change your mind, but not much. Be firm.



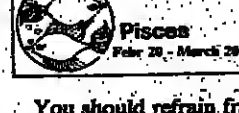
Make sure you do not promise anything that you would find it hard to carry out. And make equally sure you meet your existing commitments, your lucky numbers are 17 and 33. Avoid getting into a rut, investigate a different approach. Be cautious.



Make sure you are correctly dressed for the occasion and the climate. There is little reason to lose faith in yourself — just continue doing your best and you will succeed.



You will be able to do something greatly to your liking but should not neglect what has to be done. Your financial situation will have to be carefully watched, no impulse outlays please. Indeed this is not the time to act on impulse at all. Be forgiving.



You should refrain from thinking negative thoughts. Nor should you dwell too much on the past or fear the future. Try to make up your own mind on things, do not think what you think you should. Be tolerant.



SPORTS

Dallas outlast Pistons

DALLAS, March 26, (AP)—Herb Williams stole the ball from Detroit's Isiah Thomas and fed Derek Harper for a layup with eight seconds remaining in overtime, capping a rally that gave the Dallas Mavericks an 98-96 victory over the Pistons.

Yesterday's setback was the third straight for the defending NBA champions, matching their longest losing streak of the season. The Pistons had previously won 25 of 26 games. Dallas won four in a row.

Rolando Blackman led Dallas with 23 points and Harper added 21. Thomas scored 22 for Detroit.

Heat 105, Bucks 102
Sherman Douglas hit a tie-breaking jumper from the free-throw line with 7.5 seconds left and slapped away a Milwaukee pass at the 1.3-second mark as Miami snapped a five-game losing streak with a 105-102 victory. The Heat exceeded its number of victories from last season when the first-year team was 16-34.

Douglas had 24 points, nine assists and five steals and Billy Thompson had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Heat, who played their third consecutive game without leading scorer Rony Seikaly, who has a stomach virus. Milwaukee's Ricky Pierce scored 31 points and Jay Humphries added 23.

Lakers 116, SuperSonics 94
Orlando Woolridge and Magic Johnson scored 18 points apiece last night as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Seattle SuperSonics 116-94 for their fourth straight victory.

With the win, the Lakers also opened a 1-1/2 game lead over the Detroit Pistons for the NBA's best record.

Shawn Kemp scored 19 points for the Sonics, who missed their first 10 shots and dropped to the .500 mark with their 12th straight defeat at the Forum, including playoffs.

Timberwolves 110, Trail Blazers 105
Tyrone Corbin and Pooh Richardson each scored 20 points as the Minnesota Timberwolves broke a 22-game road losing streak and became the first Expansion team to beat Portland, holding off the Trail Blazers 110-105 last night.

Standings
Standing of National Basketball Association teams after games played yesterday (tabulate under won, lost, winning percentage, games back):

Eastern Conference			
Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Philadelphia	44	26	.629
Boston	41	26	.612
New York	39	28	.578
Washington	25	43	.368
Miami	16	34	.320
New Jersey	15	33	.321
Central Division			
Detroit	51	18	.739
Chicago	44	25	.637
Milwaukee	36	32	.529
Indiana	34	34	.500
Atlanta	32	36	.471
Cleveland	31	36	.463
Orlando	17	51	.250
Western Conference			
Midwest Division			
Utah	50	19	.725
San Antonio	46	21	.687
Dallas	38	22	.636
Denver	36	32	.529
Houston	32	36	.471
Minnesota	18	30	.364
Charlotte	13	54	.194
Pacific Division			
L.A. Lakers	51	16	.761
Portland	49	20	.710
Phoenix	46	21	.687
Seattle	34	34	.500
Golden State	31	36	.463
L.A. Clippers	26	43	.377
Sacramento	22	46	.324

Fifth seed collects \$179,000
Agassi stuns Edberg

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla., March 26, (Reuters)—American Andre Agassi won his second title of the year by soundly defeating third seed Stefan Edberg in the final of the \$2.55 million International Players Tennis Championship yesterday.

Despite a third set lapse, the fifth-seeded Agassi outplayed the third-ranked Edberg for most of the two hour seven min-

ute contest to score a 6-1 6-4 0-6 6-2 victory worth \$179,000.

"I played well today but I think we've seen a better Stefan Edberg in the past," Agassi said after his win over the highest-ranked player he has ever beaten in a final.

Edberg, who beat Agassi in the final at Indian Wells earlier this month, earned \$94,000 as runner-up but would have taken

over the world number two ranking from Boris Becker with a victory yesterday.

"I started slow and I never really got into the match," the former Wimbledon champion said of the costly defeat. "I just couldn't get to the ball."

Agassi took charge of the match from the outset as he drilled groundstrokes with precision and power that consistently caught lines and corners and kept Edberg away from the net.

The American passed Edberg with ease to reach 4-0 and the Swede was unable to hold serve until the first game of the second set.

Agassi broke Edberg for 2-1 to claim the advantage he would need to take the second set and as he continued to control points Edberg grew more demoralized and error-prone.

A concentration lapse early in the third set by Agassi allowed Edberg a brief moment to shine and after the Swede took a 4-0 lead, Agassi appeared to give up on the set.

But it was Edberg who became lethargic in the fourth set as the American kicked his game back into high gear.

Edberg's serve and volley game collapsed in the final set as he double faulted at break point in both the third and fifth games to give Agassi a 4-1 lead.

The Swede staved off two match points at 5-1 with an ace and a service winner, but Agassi held his next serve on his fourth match point with a forehand crosscourt pass that left Edberg lunging at air.

"I think me playing well magnified that he was playing a little tentative," said Agassi, who won his first title of the year last

month in San Francisco. "He made a few mistakes and I capitalized on it."

Edberg blamed some of his problems on poor footwork.

"My main problem was I was a little too slow and in tennis the most important thing is moving your feet. Everybody can hit the ball but it's getting to it at the right time and I wasn't there today."

All eight seeds, including No. 1 Ivan Lendl, have received first-round byes of the six-day Volvo of Chicago tennis tournament, officials said yesterday.

The tournament gets under way tomorrow with eight first-round singles matches.

Lendl will not play his first match until Wednesday when he faces the winner of an opening round match between Canada's Leif Shiras and a qualifier.

In other matches, Dan Goldie will face Sweden's Peter Lundgren, Venezuela's Nicholas Pereira meets Joey Rive, and John Ross battles Sweden's Nicolas Kroon.

Tomorrow evening, opening round matches will pit Todd Martin against Tim Wilkerson, and Malvia Washington against Patrick McEnroe, the brother of John.

John McEnroe dropped out of the tournament on Friday due to recurring injuries.

No. 2 seed Michael Chang will play his first match in the second round against the winner of the Martin-Wilkerson duel.

Third-seeded Tim Mayotte will face the winner of the Lundgren-Goldie match.

The other top seeds are No. 4 Christo van Rensburg, No. 5 Jim Grabb, No. 6 Richey Reneberg, No. 7 Scott Davis and No. 8 Paul Annacone.



Edberg seems tired end defeated after coming to the net to dispute a line call. (Reuters wirephoto)

Jennings justifies claim

AIX LES BAINS, France, March 26, (AP)—When Lynn Jennings was a high school running sensation more than 10 years ago, she made a boast that when she reached age 30, "I'll be the best in the world."

Now, after winning the women's title at the World Cross Country Championship, what is going to be next claim?

"To get better," Less than 100 days before her 30th birthday on July 1, she won the women's world crown on a bright, sunny day in the French Savoie mountains. Leading virtually wire-to-wire, she punctuated a record-breaking season where she went unbeaten and set national bests in two events and a world mark in another.

Now, after having an up-and-down career after being a high school distance running star, she has made good on her declaration.

It wasn't an idle boast but a calculated statement.

"It was right before I went off to college at Princeton," Jennings recalled. "I knew that my years at Princeton would not be easy ones. My re-entry into the advanced world of running would take some time."

After graduating Princeton with a history degree she went through some low periods.

"I graduated in June 1983. And I did run in the Olympic trials (in 1984)," she said. "It



Jennings crossing the finish line to win the cross country race. (Reuters wirephoto)

wasn't a wholehearted effort at all. I finished dead last in my heat at the 3,000."

I pretty much retired after that. I came home to my parents in Harvard, Massachusetts, in tears."

But she rebound from that setback. She was second in the World Cross Country Championships in 1986 and finished sixth in both the World Championships in track in 1987 and the Olympics in 1988 at 10,000 metres.

Then came another running depression.

Great Wall rally to be held in September

BEIJING, March 26, (AP)—China and Italy will jointly sponsor a 6,000-kilometre (3,700-mile) auto and motorcycle rally near China's Great Wall in September, organizers said today.

About 350 competitors in 100 racing cars and on 150 motorcycles are expected to participate in the Sept. 1-15 event, said Zhang Yaorong, general manager of the Beijing International Sports Exchange Centre, one of the sponsors.

She said the competitors will begin at Shanhaiguan, where the wall starts on China's East Coast, drive to the western end at Jiayuguan, and then return to Beijing.

The course crosses mountain ranges, farmland, loess plateaus, grasslands and deserts. It will occasionally run in sight of the Great Wall, China's ancient barrier to northern invaders, which in parts is more than 2,000 years old.

Ma Guilian, director of the Beijing Physical Culture and Sports Committee, said the route will go through areas never before opened to foreigners. It was given special approval by the Chinese government, she said.

Other sponsors are Italy 2000, Marco Polo 2000 of Italy and the Beijing Motor Sports Association.

Javelin world record unreal: Boden

AUSTIN, Texas, March 26, (Reuters)—Patrik Boden said he knew it was a good throw as soon as the javelin left his hand.

It was not until his coach started screaming, however, that he realised how good. Boden told Reuters yesterday, a day after he set a world record with a 292-foot four-inch (89.10 metres) throw.

"That was the greatest moment of my life," said the Swedish athlete, who was competing for the University of Texas at a US college athletics meet.

"I felt from the first moment that it was a very good throw, but the furthest mark was 260 feet (79.2 metres)."

"I saw it was beyond that so I thought maybe I had broken the Swedish record," said the 22-year-old from Karlstad.

"Then they measured it and suddenly our coach Mike Sanders started screaming 'it's a world record.' It was, like, so unreal," Boden said.

Boden had not just broken the record. He obliterated the old mark of 287 feet seven inches (87.66 metres) set by Czechoslovak Jan Zeleny three years ago.

For the six-foot two-inch (1.87 metre) Boden, the toss was the culmination of a dream that began many years ago.

"I have been in track since I was kid. I used to do all the events, but settled on the javelin after I had problems with my



Boden working out with his javelin. (Reuters wirephoto)

knee when I was 15 and quit running.

"This spring I had been throw-

ing very good—around 280 feet (85.3 metres)—in practice, but I didn't think my technique was

good. So I felt I could throw it further," he said.

Boden's record must still be

certified by the International Amateur Athletic Federation following the results of an obligatory doping test.

"There will be no problem," Boden guaranteed. "I don't use steroids."

Since news of the record filtered out to the rest of the world, the phone in the apartment Boden shares with teammate and countryman Stefan Petersson has not stopped ringing.

"We've had calls from every Swedish newspaper, from coaches and friends and from the president of the company that made the javelin. The phone rings every time I try to step outside," Petersson said.

Five minutes after the historic throw, Boden said he called his disbelieving parents, Martha and Lars Boden, back in Karlstad.

"At first they thought I was lying. They said 'don't give me that.' It took me a long time to convince them that I was telling the truth, but when I did they were very excited," he said.

While he enjoys his sudden fame, Boden is determined to keep his eye on his goals, which include the European Championship this summer, the World Championship next year and the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

"Right now I'm having fun, but then I've got to get my feet on the ground and start practicing," he said.

RUGBY

Australian players slam IRB

SYDNEY, March 26, (Reuters)—Leading Australian players including Wallaby captain Ian Farr-Jones today roundly condemned the postponement by the International Rugby Board (IRB) of a decision on changing amateur rules.

The Australian Rugby Football Union appealed for cash saying a breakaway from the IRB, which some players suggested should be considered, would serve no useful purpose.

An IRB meeting last week decided players could be compensated for loss of earnings from home internationals but deferred a decision on payments for activities such as writing books, broadcasting and advertising. Players are currently banned from making money from such activities.

"We've been waiting at least 10 years for a decision on this," said ex-captain Simon Poidevin. "Why should we wait for another six months? You now really have to ask who are the officials running this game for."

"This is an absolute cop-out, gutless reaction," Steve Carter told the Sydney Morning Herald. "It would have been better for them to reject it out of hand."

Poidevin and Farr-Jones said Australia and New Zealand should consider defying the IRB on the payments issue.

Farr-Jones said: "The issue is getting closer. I was over in New Zealand last weekend and one of their senior players told me that their delegates were contemplating pulling out of the IRB if common sense did not prevail."

"I think the Southern Hemisphere countries should just go out and do their own thing," said Poidevin. "I don't want to see the game going fully professional...but players must have some incentive to stay and play rugby."

Bob Fordham, executive director of the Australian Rugby Football Union, said he understood the players' frustration but a split with the IRB was out of the question.

"We understand how they feel because we share their view entirely," he told reporters. "But I'm absolutely convinced the board will see the light between now and October and the laws will be changed."

"There is no way we would consider cutting ties with the board. We would simply be cutting off our nose to spite our face."

Cuba could one day host Games: Castro

HAVANA, March 26, (Reuters)—Cuban President Fidel Castro said yesterday he believed Cuba could one day host the Olympic Games.

"I'm thinking that one day we could even have the Olympics here," the Cuban leader told a news conference in Havana.

The news conference was held to mark the completion of 12 new tennis courts, part of a complex of sports installations planned for the August 1991 Pan-American Games in Cuba.

Asked whether Cuba could afford the luxury of hosting such an international event, given the serious economic difficulties facing the island, Castro replied:

"We will fight to the end to honour our obligation to international sport, to Latin America and to the sporting organisations of Latin America."

Castro said the construction of facilities for the 1991 Pan-American games was a social and economic priority for the nation. "There would have to be exceptional conditions, abnormal conditions for the construction of the installations to be halted," he added.

Castro warned Cubans that possible disruptions in Cuba's economic links with Eastern Europe may result in the government having to cut back all but the most vital development projects.

Hosting the 1991 Pan-American Games will cost Cuba, which is already badly short of hard currency, an estimated \$40 million but the Cuban leader said it was "not just a question of mere Games."

He said construction like the Olympic Stadium and village, the Olympic swimming pool and a new velodrome were an investment which would have long-term value for the nation.

They would be used by the Cuban people and could also boost tourism. Mario Vazquez Rana, president of the Pan-American sports organisation, said he was satisfied with the progress of Cuba's preparations for the Games.

"The installations are coming along fast and are probably ahead of schedule," he said. They were due to be completed by the end of 1990.

Vazquez Rana said the games organising committee and his own organisation were working to resolve problems arising from a US trade embargo against Cuba, which is blocking the purchase of anti-doping equipment from the United States and coverage of the event by the US television network ABC.



The victorious Socials cricket team.

Socials win Shuwaikh Champions Trophy

SOCIALS Cricket Club beat Young Brothers by 115 runs in the Shuwaikh Champions Trophy finals earlier this week.

Young Brothers won the toss and put Socials in to bat. Their gamble failed as Socials amassed a match-winning total of 215 for 5 wickets in the allotted 30 overs.

Socials lost Ajit in the 2nd over, playing on, but thereafter Saleem and Arun put their heads down and mixed aggression with caution to take Socials to a safe total.

Saleem, the Man of the Match, was out for Rashid Ansari for a well-deserved 77 (7 fours and one six) with the score at 150. Chris and Arun hammered the bowlers to all parts of the ground before the former was stumped

after scoring an aggressive 19, including a huge 6 over long on. Three runs later Arun Nair, the batsman of the Series, was out for a superb 71 (4 fours and a six). A quickfire 27 not out (3 fours and a six) by Shanta took Socials in mammoth total of 215.

Young Brothers started their innings disastrously, losing three wickets in as many overs for only 12 runs. Rasnid gave some respectability to the total by exhibiting some fluent strokes to the fence until he fell to an excellent catch by Shanta. Young Brothers had no answer to the bowling of Darryl, who mesmerised the batsman with his flight variation and was the most successful bowler with 4 for 15.

The participating teams thanked Omar Qadri, the organisers-cum-sponsor, for his tremendous efforts in organising a very successful tournament and also for promoting the game.



Some of the players with their prizes.

Cup boss worried by Naples stadium delays

NAPLES, Italy, March 26, (Reuters): Luca di Montezemolo, the man masterminding the soccer World Cup in Italy, said yesterday he was seriously worried that work on Naples stadium might not be completed in time for the finals which begin in June.

"There are very serious delays which worry me and ought to worry Neapolitans as well," said Montezemolo, indicating construction work

outside the San Paolo stadium, which resembles a giant building site.

"Naples knew five years ago that it would co-host the World Cup but evidently that wasn't long enough," said the head of the World Cup organising committee after watching Napoli's League match against Juventus.

Work to modernise the stadium began six months after the official October 1987

starting date the Naples World Cup committee said was necessary for all work to be completed on time.

Inside the stadium, the press and VIP stands and new dressing rooms are still incomplete and Naples council is reported to be already in serious debt and struggling to find creditors to lend it money to meet the soaring contractors' bill.

The final cost of completing the stadium is likely to be double the original 1987 estimate of 75 billion lire (\$60 million).

Napoli police and local councillors say they believe the local mafia — the Camorra — are linked to some of the construction firms involved in World Cup projects, and suggest this may be one reason for the escalation of costs.

Porto on course for title

Real on target for record

MADRID, March 26, (Reuters): Leading striker Hugo Sanchez scored twice as Real Madrid beat Tenerife 5-2 yesterday and strode closer to another Spanish Soccer League title and national goal-scoring record.

Real, nine points clear in the championship race, have scored 90 goals this season and are just six short of Barcelona's record total of 1958-59, while Sanchez has his eye on the individual record which has stood for 39 years.

The Mexican striker's brace yesterday took his total for the season to 33, three short of Telmo Zarra's tally for Athletic Bilbao in the 1950-51 season with seven games remaining.

Real were made to work for victory, with Tenerife equalising twice. But Bernd Schuster's mar-

shalling and Sanchez' infallible marksmanship ensured Real's four-month unbeaten run continued.

Uruguayan World Cup goalkeeper Javier Zanetti withstood the Real onslaught for 15 minutes until Sanchez hit a free-kick over the defence and into the net off a post.

Felipe Minambres equalised 20 minutes later but in the last minute of the first half Fernando Hierro put the home side ahead again.

A rocketing shot from the half-way line by Salvador Renteria surprised Real keeper Pacy Buayo to put Tenerife level five minutes after half-time.

Assured
Two minutes later Schuster's freekick was headed in by Argentine international Oscar Rug-

geri.

Sanchez scored again 20 minutes later and, with victory assured and an open goal before him, passed to young star Rafael Martin Vazquez for Real's fifth.

Atletico Madrid humiliated Barcelona with a 2-0 away win on Saturday which saw the Catalans slip two places to fourth after Valencia won 1-0 in Castellon yesterday.

Atletico and Valencia are joint second with 42 points, while Barcelona have 40.

Algerian international Rabah Madjer scored yesterday to help keep Porto on target for the Portuguese First Division soccer title with a 2-1 away win over mid-table Braga.

European Cup semifinalists Benfica kept up the pressure with a 2-1 home win over fourth-placed Lisbon rivals Sporting in front of 70,000 spectators.

With nine games to go, Porto lead the table by three points.

Majder, voted Best Player in this month's African Nations Cup in Algeria, came on at half-time and popped up by the post to turn in a free-kick in the 65th minute.

Safe
He missed two later opportunities but Jaime Magalhaes made the game safe for Porto.

Brazilian Paulo Moroni scored a consolation goal for Braga three minutes from time.

Brazilian Adesvaldo Lima, who scored twice in Benfica's 3-0 midweek European Cup demolition of Dnepropetrovsk, was guilty of a dreadful miss against Sporting but made up for the lapse with a goal soon afterwards.

Bursting through towards an empty goal with Swedish striker Mats Magnusson, Lima shot off-

balance and missed instead of giving his team-mate an easy chance.

But he redeemed himself with a fine goal a few minutes later, blasting home an intelligent pass from compatriot Valdo.

Vitor Paneira scored Benfica's other goal, while Brazilian international Paulo Silas scored from outside the area for Sporting's consolation goal.

Guimaraes stayed third by drawing 1-1 with Uniao Madeira and fifth-placed Setubal closed on Sporting with a 1-0 win at Estrela Amadora.

Brazilian striker Bebeto wants to join a European club after the World Cup finals because he is being forced to play too much soccer in his own country.

Bebeto, who is in Brazil's squad to play England at Wembley on Wednesday, said he had received offers to play in Europe next season but he did not want to give further details.

Eurico Miranda, director of his club Vasco, is demanding a transfer fee of \$10 million.

"Because of the Libertadores Cup we will play six games in 12 days at the start of next month. It's very, very tiring, it wears you out and that's why I want to go to Europe," he told Reuters.

Tired
"There's also a danger of getting injured and the supporters don't remember that you're tired. You have to find the motivation from inside yourself."

"In Europe you play on Sunday and occasionally there is a midweek match. You have more time to recover," he added.

Bebeto was Brazil's top scorer last year with 12 goals in 19 games.

Cerezo hurt

GENOA, Italy, March 26, (AP): Toniolo Cerezo, the veteran Brazilian midfielder of Sampdoria of Genoa, tore his left knee ligaments in Sunday's Italian Major League action and club doctors said he will be sidelined for the rest of the season.

Some Italian soccer commentators speculated that the severe injury may put an end to the career of the 35-year-old Cerezo, formerly of Atletico Micoiro.

Cerezo was injured in the early minutes of the Bologna-Sampdoria game, which La Samp lost 1-0.



Ajax score narrow victory

AMSTERDAM, March 26, (Reuters): Ajax Amsterdam maintained their challenge for the Dutch League title yesterday when an early goal by winger Bryan Roy gave them a 1-0 home win over Fortuna Sittard.

Ajax moved back into second place in the First Division, two points behind leaders PSV Eindhoven and with a game in hand.

On Saturday PSV, chasing their fifth consecutive title, won 1-0 at MVV Maastricht and Roda JC moved ahead Ajax with a 5-0 win over relegation-bound Haarlem.

Roy struck after just two minutes to bring some

relief to Ajax, who had not scored in their two previous League matches.

He slid the ball home after a fine run by Wim Jonk, deputising for Ajax skipper Jan Wouters who yesterday began a six-match suspension for elbowing an opponent.

Roy hit the bar with a curling free kick early in the second half while Swedish striker Stefan Pettersson was denied a goal by Fortuna keeper Ruud Hesp.

Fifth-placed Twente Enschede slumped to their first home League defeat for over a year, going down 1-0 to RKC Waalwijk. Marco van Hoogdaler grabbed the winner for RKC three minutes from time.

I'm better prepared for 1990 Cup: Maradona

ROME, March 26, (Reuters): Argentine captain Diego Maradona, an inspirational figure in Napoli's 3-1 defeat of Juventus yesterday, declared afterwards he was fitter and better prepared for this year's World Cup finals than in Mexico four years ago.

Scorning critics who say his days of footballing genius are over, Maradona said: "Do you want to know the truth? I'm better than in 1986."

"My weight's better, my health's better, not to mention my will to play. If I need to spell it out, I'm aiming to have another great World Cup."

Maradona's two goals yesterday were eloquent testimony to his claims that he has redis-

covered his old touch and sharpness — his second was a perfectly flighted free-kick from five metres outside the penalty area.

Now his desire to lead Argentina to a second successive World Cup crown appears to be rekindled.

"To have a great World Cup, I need first to have a great end to the championship," he said.

Napoli still trail Italian League leaders AC Milan by a point and the European champions look to have overcome their recent loss of form. After trailing to an early goal on Sunday, Milan brushed aside Lecce 2-1.

Their rally was due largely to captain Franco Baresi's first goal of the season which levelled the scores by half-time.

Canada win

OTTAWA, March 26, (AP): Canada won the gold medal, but everybody was claiming victory for the sport after the first World Championship of women's hockey ended yesterday.

"It's opened so many eyes," player Dawn McGuire said after Canada beat the United States 5-2 to win the tournament. "They've all seen it. We can all play hockey."

Yesterday, 8,784 flag-waving, roaring fans — likely the biggest crowd ever at a women's hockey game in Canada — packed the Ottawa Civic Centre to watch the Canadian team rebound from a two-goal deficit to beat the Americans.

Even the losers took comfort in the crowd and the attention their often ignored sport gained over the week-long tournament, the first to be sanctioned by the international ice hockey federation.

Oldest musher completes race

NOME, Alaska, March 26, (UPI): Norman Vaughan, 84, the dog-mushing senior citizen hero of Alaska, was resting yesterday in Nome after completing the gruelling 1,161-mile Iditarod sled dog race across the Arctic wilderness.

"I feel a little stiff — wait a minute, I'm ancient and very stiff," quipped Vaughan, sitting

around a breakfast table with friends yesterday for his first normal meal, following his first night of sleep in a bed, after three weeks on the gruelling winter trek across the Alaska wilderness.

Vaughan finished at the tail end of the race — but he finished. The old man of the Arctic sport of long-distance sled dog

racing finished 10 days after Susan Butcher won the race.

Vaughan crossed the finish line Saturday night three weeks after leaving the March 3 race start in downtown Anchorage where 70 sled dog teams raced off into the wilderness.

Butcher won her fourth Iditarod victory March 14 in a record time.

Ferrari all set for Imola homecoming

SAO PAULO, Brazil, March 26, (Reuters): Alain Prost's victory in yesterday's Brazilian Grand Prix has set up the revived Ferrari team for a glorious homecoming next month when the Formula One circus moves to Europe and the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola.

After suffering grimly in the season opening United States Grand Prix in Phoenix two weeks ago when both of their cars failed to finish, Ferrari responded in brilliant style.

Prost claimed his 40th career win and his British team mate Nigel Mansell finished fourth.

"We had a bad time in Phoenix," said Prost. "But that is behind us now and we are really looking forward to racing at Imola."

"Our only problem has been that we have not been fast enough in qualifying and if we want to win the world championship we shall have to improve on that."

"But we shall have a new engine and a new chassis ready for Imola so I think we can improve. This weekend we were very competitive in race trim and with full tanks, but not when we



Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello (centre) shakes hands with Prost while Senna (right) looks on. Right: Prost guides his Ferrari through the turns. (Reuters wirephoto)

were qualifying."

Prost, delighted with his record sixth win in Brazil, said he now relished the opportunity of scrapping with his former employers McLaren for the championship.

"McLaren have always been

very good at Imola and very successful there. We shall have to try very hard to match them. I think they still have a very small advantage on power, but our new engine will help."

McLaren managing director Ron Dennis was clearly unhappy

required a long pit stop to have his nose cone and front wing replaced.

Dennis said tersely after the race: "We may have lost, but we weren't beaten."

For Dennis, it had been a frustrating weekend in which he attracted further controversy and also escalated his own private feud with Ferrari and their management by making allegations about the way in which the Italian team had persuaded his former chief engineer Steve Nichols to leave McLaren for Ferrari.

Nichols, grinning broadly in the middle of a celebratory Ferrari pit after the race, shrugged aside the Dennis allegations.

"He can say what he likes. I am not bothered. I have enough to think about without that sort of thing," he said.

One of the most telling remarks in the wake of a Ferrari win which proves both the Italians and McLaren are now set for a year of competitive and close racing came from Honda's Formula One engineer Osamu Goto.

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UNLV, Georgia Tech complete final four

OAKLAND, Calif., March 26, (Reuters): The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and Georgia Tech earned the last two berths in the final four of the NCAA US College Basketball Championships yesterday.

US Olympian Stacey Augmon scored 33 points to lead UNLV to a 131-101 rout that ended the hopes of sentimental favourite Loyola Marymount, while Dennis Scott poured in 40 points and Kenny Anderson added 30 to lift Georgia Tech to a 93-91 win over the University of Minnesota.

UNLV and Georgia Tech join Duke University and the University of Arkansas in Denver for next week's championship games. On Saturday Duke upset the University of Connecticut 79-78 in overtime and Arkansas defeated the University of Texas 88-85.

Loyola Marymount, unable to contain the potent offensive attack on the running rebels and were eliminated three weeks after the death of its star Hank Gathers, who collapsed during a game from heart failure.

Bo Kimble, who scored a game high 42 points, continued to honour Gathers by taking his first free throw left hand. The team also wore a patch with Gathers' number 44 on their uniforms in tribute to their fallen comrade.

UNLV showed no mercy however and turned an early 16-4 lead into a 67-47 halftime advantage with their wide open style of play. UNLV continued to pour it on in the second half and became the only top-seeded team in the 64-school tournament to claim a place in the coveted final four.

Georgia Tech trailed 49-47 at the half of a game that was tied four times, the last at 77-77.

They took the lead for the last time on Scott's late three-point basket and hung on as Minnesota's Kevin Lynch missed a three-point try for the win at the final buzzer.

Queensland struggle

SYDNEY, March 26, (Reuters): Queensland, set 654 to win their first Sheffield Shield cricket final, were struggling to avoid a resounding defeat by New South Wales today.

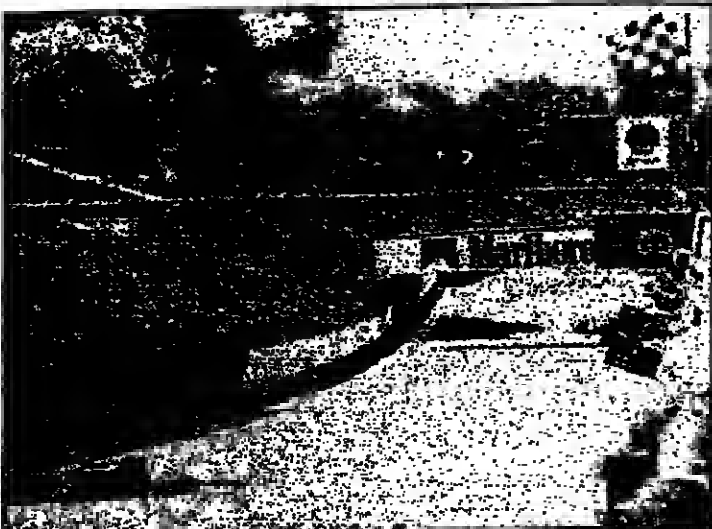
At stumps on the fourth day of the five-day match, Queensland were 156 for four in their second innings. Australian captain Allan Border having been dismissed for 34.

Earlier New South Wales, in line for a record 40th Shield title, had declared their second innings at 396 for nine.

Mark Waugh hit an unbeaten 78 in the morning session, reaching 1,000 runs for the season on the way, before the declaration.

Opener Peter Cantrell, who scored 60, and Border were the only Queensland batsmen to hold out against the New South Wales attack before both fell to spin.

Leg spinner Adrian Tucker had Border caught behind while wicketkeeper Phil Emery stumped Cantrell off Greg Matthews.



Prost gets the checkered flag. (Reuters wirephoto)



The winner with his trophy.



Prost leads the race at the start. (Reuters wirephoto)

India, West Indies officials seek tour decision

CALCUTTA, March 26. (Reuters): Cricket officials from India and West Indies aim to resolve a misunderstanding over a tour involving the two teams when they meet in London in June.

The issue to be settled is whether West Indies tour India in the 1990-91 season or the Indians go to the Caribbean.

Biswanath Dutt, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India

(BCCI) said he expected the misunderstanding to be cleared up at the International Cricket Conference (ICC) annual meeting in London on June 28.

Dutt said: "As far as I am concerned, there is no question of cancellation, the whole tour is tentative and will be so before June 28... the situation is fluid."

West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICC) president Clyde Walcott was

reported as saying on Friday that India had said the scheduled tour by West Indies was cancelled.

Indian cricket board sources said India was insisting that they toured West Indies under an agreement between the two boards. The agreement was reached after the last West Indies tour of India in 1987, the sources said.

The 1987 tour was undertaken at a

time when it was India's turn to tour West Indies, the sources added.

"Therefore, the West Indies board had agreed that India would go on two consecutive tours of the West Indies," one board official said.

India toured the Caribbean 12 months ago, the last time they met West Indies in a Test series.

W. Indies restrict England to 288

Ambrose takes four wickets for 59 runs

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, March 26. (Reuters): West Indies, fired up when Ian Bishop and Ezra Moseley captured four wickets in 11 overs, fought back to upset England's hopes of a big first innings lead in the third cricket Test yesterday.

The pace quartet of Bishop, Moseley, Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh took the last eight wickets for 93 to dismiss England for 288 in reply to West Indies first innings of 199 on the rain-hit third day at Queen's Park Oval.

West Indies, 89 behind, reduced the deficit by 11 without loss before the umpires' offer of bad light was accepted by the batsmen after only four balls from Devoa Malcolm.

The paceman struck Gordon Greenidge on the helmet with what proved to be the final delivery of the day, conceding four leg byes.

West Indies dimmed England's prospects of a big lead when Bishop removed Graham Gooch for 84 immediately play began after a rain-delayed start.

Then Moseley, who dispatched Robin Smith and Roh Bailey with consecutive balls, sparked a slump in which three wickets fell in four deliveries.

David Capel, with a defiant 40 after being dropped on one, frustrated West Indies attempt to wrap up the innings swiftly, the last two wickets adding 44.

West Indies, trailing 1-0 to the



Ambrose, W. Indies' most successful bowler

five-Test series, resume their innings tomorrow after a rest day.

On a pitch still offering considerable movement off the seam and which was a little variable in

hounce, the West Indian pacemen bowled magnificently.

Ambrose, who took both wickets to fall on Saturday, was the most successful with four for 59, while Bishop ended with three for 69.

Resuming at 189 for two, England were banking on Gooch to continue his anchor role but he fell to the fifth ball of the day with six added to the total after the start had been delayed by 100 minutes.

The England captain was caught behind by Jeff Dujon when Bishop got one to move away off the seam and take the edge. Gooch batted for six and a half hours and faced 261 balls, of which he hit only three for four.

West Indies struck the triple blow that undermined the middle order 40 minutes after lunch.

Smith was undone by late away movement to be caught behind, giving Moseley his first Test wicket, while Bailey was surprised next ball by a vicious bouncer which he could only glove to Gus Logie at short leg.

When Allan Lamb was bowled off his helmet for 32 in the next over, having ducked in to a Bishop bouncer, three wickets had fallen with the total 214.

Had Capel not been dropped at first slip by Greenidge off Moseley when he had made only one, England would have been 215 for seven without any specialist batsmen remaining.

As it was, Capel and Jack Rus-

sell stayed together for 21 overs to add 29 before the wicket-keeper was caught at second slip off Walsh for 15.

Gladstone Small followed in the next over when he was plumb lbw to Bishop for nought, but Angus Fraser got behind the line and survived for 57 balls before he was caught at third slip off Ambrose for 11. His partnership for the ninth wicket with Capel was worth 40.

Capel was last out when he hooked Ambrose straight to Moseley at long leg, having faced 122 balls and hit three fours.

Scoreboard

WEST INDIES first innings 199 (G. Logie 98, D. Malcolm 100 for 80)

ENGLAND first innings (overnight 189 for two)

G. Gooch c Dujon b Bishop	84
W. Larkins c Dujon b Ambrose	54
A. Stewart c Dujon b Ambrose	9
A. Lamb b Bishop	32
R. Smith c Dujon b Moseley	5
R. Bailey c Logie b Moseley	0
D. Capel c Moseley b Ambrose	40
R. Russell c Best b Walsh	15
G. Small lbw b Bishop	0
A. Fraser c Hooper b Ambrose	11
D. Malcolm not out	0
D. Malcolm not out	0
Extras (lb-6 lb-13 nb-16 w-3)	38
Total	288
Fall of wickets: 1-112 2-152 3-195 4-214 5-214 6-214 7-243 8-244 9-284	
Bowling: Ambrose 38.2-8-59-4, Bishop 31-6-69-3, Walsh 22-5-45-1, Hooper 18-5-26-0, Moseley 30-5-70-2	
WEST INDIES second innings	
G. Greenidge not out	6
D. Haynes not out	0
Extras (lb-4 w-1)	5
Bowling (no date): Malcolm 0.4-0-7-0	

Bushnaq and Avci clinch KIH tennis singles titles

IN windswept conditions at the Kuwait International Hotel's 1990 Amateur Tennis Classic, the top seeds won their respective events.

Filiz Avci won the women's singles title by sweeping aside second seeded Ghada Barakat 6-4, 6-0. Third place went to Samieh Issa who earned a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Bahia Jaafar.

In the men's singles action, Saleh Bushnaq battled Shaji John for nearly two hours to win the title 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, while second seeded Ayman Hijawi defeated Arun Nair 6-3, 6-4 for third place.

In doubles, Bushnaq teamed with Maged Adham to squeeze by second seeded Hijawi and Walid Abu Lughud 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 for the title. The fight for third place had Nabil El Kady and Walid Salah narrowly defeat Shaji John and Mohammed



All the winners with KIH executives and M. A. Najia (extreme left).

Saleh 4-6, 6-1, 7-5.

The tournament was rounded up with an elaborate evening barbecue, at the Garden Pool of the Kuwait International.

The prizes were distributed by M. A. Najia, VP-operations, Kuwait Hotels Co. and Mrs. Monika Simon, wife of the general manager of the Kuwait International Hotel, H. Simon. In addition to the distribution

of trophies and medals the evening's excitement was a Lucky Draw of various prizes the most attractive being 2 motorbikes sponsored by Northern Gulf Trading Co. agents of Hyundai.

The trophies were contributed by Americana and the T-shirts by Al Andalus Trading. Ghada Barakat won the 125cc motorbike and Guenter Zacherl won the 150cc.



Mir Ifukhar

BMB beat Indian Veterans

BMB Cricket Club beat Indian Veterans by 16 runs in a friendly match at the Salmiya ground earlier this week.

BMB batted first but were off to a bad start when they lost their first seven wickets for only 49 runs. Mir Ifukhar, a guest player and Lucky Star team captain, then turned the tide of the game by hitting four fours in the first over he faced.

The Veteran howlers and remained unbeaten on 103 as BMB reached 226 runs in the allotted overs. Ifukhar got some good support from Yunis Chaudhry, who hit an unbeaten 52.

Patel took four wickets for the Indian Veterans.

In reply, Indian Veterans were only able to score 210 for the loss of seven wickets. Rajpal scored 52, Sarkar 42 and Patel 43.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Soccer friendly

ROME, March 26. (Reuters): Italy's national soccer manager Azzeglio Vicini called up leading Juventus goalscorer Salvatore Schillaci today to the squad for a friendly against Switzerland in Basle on Saturday.

Cup officials

TIRRENA, Italy, March 26. (Reuters): The officials refereeing this summer's World Cup soccer matches in Italy gathered near Pisa today for a three-day meeting to ensure uniform refereeing of the 52 games.

Five-day match

HARARE, March 26. (Reuters): England A were 334 for seven wickets in reply to Zimbabwe's 149 as close of play on the third day of the third and final five-day cricket match today.

Haas dismissed

STUTTGART, West Germany, March 26. (Reuters): Former Dutch international Arie Haas, who guided VfB Stuttgart to their first European soccer final last year, was sacked today as coach of the West German First Division club, VfB, who were beaten by Diego Maradona's Napoli in last season's UEFA Cup final, said they had dismissed the 41-year-old Haas because they were worried about qualifying for next year's European competition.

BRIDGE

RESULTS of the Barclay's Bridge Tournament (7th week) played at the Regency Palace on Sunday:

N/S

1. Rima & Fouad Farah
 2. Nabil Akel & Narenda Shah
 3. Dora Materny & Adel Bayoumi
- E/W
1. Shankara Reddy & Dhruva Mukarjee
 2. Sherin Basyouni & Ahmed Hneidi
 3. Hisham Al Gandour & Mustafa Ghaffar

Results of the Hubera Centre Bridge Club game played on Saturday:

1. K.T. Simon & J. Gajjar
 2. Sultan Ali & Amin Shenli
 3. Al Saleh & Sayemeh
- E/W
1. Peter Harris & Carsten Buus
 2. Beatrice Pereira & Aubrey D'Souza
 3. Jaya Sapre & Desmond Pereira

Results of the Regency Ladies Bridge Club game held last Wednesday:

1. Nabil Akel & Lollo Murthwaite
 2. Rima Ayyad & Ghofran Mikail
 3. Nida Khalef & Suhendan Oakey
- Results of the SAS Ladies Bridge Club game played on Sunday:
1. Nabil Akel & Lollo Murthwaite
 2. Rabab Abboushi & Nadia Arahi
 3. Rima Ayyad & Ghofran Mikail

Results of the Mesalish Ladies Bridge Club game yesterday:

1. Nabil Akel & Lollo Murthwaite
2. Jamila Akel & Rabab Abboushi
3. Rima Ayyad & Nalia Kassem

Karpov to meet Kasparov

KUALA LUMPUR, March 26. (Reuters): Former world champion Anatoly Karpov of the Soviet Union beat Jan Timman of the Netherlands to win the World Candidates Chess Final today.

Karpov, 39, will now meet fellow countryman and title holder Garry Kasparov in the world chess championship to be played in Lyons, France in October.

Karpov won the deciding ninth game today in 56 moves to score 6.5 points against Timman's 2.5 points. Under the rules, the winner is the first player to reach 6.5 points.

One point is awarded for a win and half a point for a draw.

The match began on March 8. It saw four wins and five draws in the scheduled 12-game match.

In today's game, Karpov survived a tense time scramble before the 40th move. He completed the allocated amount of moves with seconds to go before a forfeit.

Karpov then demonstrated his mastery in the end game, going for a win from the 46th move when many experts believed he would go for a draw.

The Karpov-Kasparov duel renews one of the hottest rivalries in chess history.

Kasparov, the 26-year-old Soviet champion, is the highest-ranked player in history, according to the biannual ranking list of the International Chess Federation.

In 1986, he defeated archrival Karpov in their second title duel and became, at 22, the youngest titleholder in history.

Impatient, outspoken and decisive, Kasparov publicly criticised Soviet sports officials a year before Soviet

President Mikhail S. Gorbachev allowed greater openness.

Kasparov has a British manager to look after his business interests, appears live on Western talk shows and has been interviewed by Playboy magazine.

In March 1989, he married Maria Aratova, a 24-year-old English translator for the Novosti news agency.

In October, he overcame Deep Thought, the world computer champion 2-0 in a match in New York.

His remaining ambition, he said, "is to beat Karpov convincingly."

The personal and professional rivalry between the two has already stretched over a record-breaking 131 games.

The 38-year-old Karpov held the world title for 10 years before first defending it against Kasparov in 1985.

Kasparov is more private, but plays a coolly tenacious game.

A bitter feud flared between International Chess Federation president Campomanes and Kasparov in Moscow in 1985 when Campomanes halted Kasparov's first title duel with Anatoly Karpov without result, but leaving Karpov the champion.

Campomanes and Karpov are long-time friends. Although trailing, Kasparov had just won two games in a row while Karpov had failed to secure a victory for 21 games. Kasparov repeatedly charged that Campomanes intervened to save Karpov, a charge Campomanes denies.

Boxer joins brawl outside the ring

BIRMINGHAM, England, March 26. (AP): The bell had just gone for the start of the third and final round when boxer Geoff McCreech saw another fight erupt just outside the ring.

He couldn't resist it.

McCreech leaped into the front row of the seats to join in the brawl.

"There was a disturbance going on in the crowd and the next thing, he just dived straight over the ropes and into the public at ringside," said Peter Blinkinsopp, secretary of the Midlands division of Britain's Amateur Boxing Association. "I've never seen anything like it."

ABA officials began an investigation today into what prompted the second embarrassing conclusion to a British bout in six months.

In September, professional lightweight Steve McCarthy was floored by the mother of opponent Tony Wilson. Minna Wilson climbed into the ring during the third round of the fight and clobbered McCarthy with her high-heeled shoe. The fighter ended three head stitches.

In Saturday's incident at Longbridge, a suburb of this English Midlands town, McCreech was quickly grabbed by his cornermen after abandoning his amateur welterweight fight — a national semifinal against Robert McCracken.

He was ushered back into the ring but his dispute was done. McCreech was disqualified.

Press reports said the crowd disturbances may have involved McCreech's father and supporters of McCracken, a local Birmingham fighter. Officials said that whoever caused it, McCreech was still out of order.

Bradley breaks \$3m mark

PHOENIX, Ariz., March 26. (Reuters): Pat Bradley claimed her 25th title with a one stroke victory at the Turquoise Classic yesterday and became the first player to the history of the US Women's Golf Tour to surpass \$3 million in career earnings.

Bradley, who picked up \$75,000 for her victory, started the \$500,000 event just \$15,232 short of the three million mark.

"What this means is 17 years of a lot of miles," said Bradley, who joined the LPGA Tour in January 1974.

Bradley, who began the day with a one stroke lead over Japan's Ayako Okamoto, shot a two-under-par 71 for a 12-under-280 total but did not secure victory until the final hole when she made par and Okamoto three-putted for a bogey.

Gamez triumphs

ORLANDO, Fla., March 26. (Reuters): Robert Gamez played the greatest shot of the season yesterday when he eagled the difficult 18th hole at the Bay Hill Club with a seven iron to win the \$900,000 Orlando Invitational Golf Tournament by one stroke.

The eagle, Gamez's second of the day, gave him a final-round six-under-par 66 and a 13-under-par 274 total. The shot also sealed another disappointment for Australian Greg Norman, who finished second.

Late birdies give Romero victory



Romero raises his arms in victory

FLORENCE, Italy, March 26. (Reuters): Eduardo Romero pulled off Argentina's second European Golf Tour victory in eight days, overhauling Britaio's Russell Claydon in the last round of the Volvo Open with a late charge at the Ugolino Club yesterday.

It had looked odds-on a British victory as Rookie professional Claydon went out in 32 and moved three strokes clear of compatriot Colin Montgomerie, the overnight leader, with seven holes to play.

But he faltered as Romero birdied four of the last five holes for a 67 to claim another victory for Argentina following the success of Vicente Fernandez in the Tenerife Open the previous weekend.

Romero finished 23 under par on 265 — one ahead of Claydon,

who birdied the last from 15 feet for a 69, and Montgomerie.

Romero, who won last year's Lancome Trophy in Paris, collected £33,330 (\$53,330) for his second Tour victory.

Montgomerie and Claydon each gained £17,360 (\$27,780) for sharing second place, finishing three strokes clear of Australian Roger Davis and Sweden's Mats Hallberg, who were joint fourth after respective final rounds of 66 and 68.

Romero said: "I've been playing well all season and after finishing second to Ian Woosnam in the Mediterranean Open I felt I could win one."

"Obviously Vicente's victory was an inspiration and no doubt we'll be dancing all night when we fly home to Buenos Aires together tomorrow."

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- More choice on your art
- More choice on your science
- More choice on your technology
- More choice on your innovation
- More choice on your leadership
- More choice on your vision
- More choice on your mission
- More choice on your values
- More choice on your beliefs
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